

A
LITTLE TREASURY
of
MODERN POETRY
English and American

Edited
with an Introduction by
OSCAR WILLIAMS



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INTRODUCTION

I

I think England has had more good poets from 1900 to the present day than during any period of the same length since the early seventeenth century

W B YEATS

IF we include in the list of good poets both the American and the English, the modern period shows itself resplendent in its wealth of poetry. So I have decided to call this collection of modern poetry a *treasury*, although that word connotes such riches that it has been applied before only to anthologies that draw their selections from centuries. I have taken the poems here included mostly from the time between 1896, the year of the publication of A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad*, and the present, a short fifty years, yet so abundant, not only in the number of its good poets and good poems, but also in its variety of poetic techniques and subject-matters, that it rivals any preceding century.

Perhaps variety is exactly its chief characteristic. Former periods have had a discernible prevailing poetic attitude and a permissible kind of poetic subject-matter. We have achieved limitless freedom of choice as to subject-matter: anything that can be thought or talked about is acceptable as material for poems. And the range

of what educated and sensitive persons do think and talk about would not too long ago have seemed incredible. Awareness has been sharpened by knowledge of all geographical *loci*, has been broadened by the study of the literatures and customs of all nations, has been intensified by knowledge of depth psychology and kept sensitized by the incessant impact of those emotions inevitable when life is uncertain and tragic through war and the nature-disturbing activities of the scientists. We have not only been taught by the cultures of all past societies, in which sense we are great inheritors, but we have also had forced upon our vision innumerable vistas of possible new environments, choosing among which coerces us into being the arbiters of the future. Certainly this extension of influences, material, and conflicts has been a stimulus to the development of good poets.

Also, the desuetude of nineteenth-century materialism, with its obverse of belief in "progress," a philosophy so narrow that it imposed a mental stricture upon imagination which even poets could not escape, has brought about a freer and more truthful manipulation of ideas. The central attitude of science has, ever since its rise to power, positively affected all contemporary attitudes, even of those who deny scientific values. So that, when science itself swung round to at least an oblique recognition of the non-material mysteries of life, the essentially spiritual art of poetry could flourish less self-consciously. It is now possible for a truth-respecting poet to admit the validity of much scientific discovery without denying the mysterious realities.

In fact, certain scientific data have become material which the poet can comfortably use. Devices which have evolved from an understanding of the new psychology are part of modern poetic equipment, and may, in some measure, add to the effectiveness of a poem which, if

7
written by a poet of like calibre in the nineteenth century, would have been of little interest. And, whatever we may think of the end results of science, we must admit that scientific method, both logical and empirical, has contributed to literary craftsmanship by way of its influence upon recent literary criticism. Extraordinary advances in critical method make the inspection of a poem today by a first-class critic as close and careful as a chemical analysis. Poets read, practise, and write in the light of this severe and agile examination, with the result that contemporary minor poetry, at least, has reached an unprecedented high quality.

Of course this observation upon the general production of verse does not hold for the work of major poets. In any age the major poet acts as though by revelation, in strict conformance to the truth of life, which is his base, no matter how his form may depend upon tradition. He does not have to wait for any formulation of the fundamentals of depth psychology in order to use its reality in his work. It is not by accident that the Oedipus Complex derives its name from the work of an ancient poet. The vital perception of a major poet makes all his discoveries of the future with an urgent immediacy and contrives from them the theme of his poems, which he produces as by an act of nature. An insight which the poet considers only structural material incidental to the integral whole of his poem is, for the scientist, a discovery upon the exposition of which he may expend the energies of a lifetime.

In our time, all that is extrovert is worshipped, therefore the scientist has a numerous following, the poet is revealed to a diminishing few. Nevertheless, though the audience diminishes, this century has had, and now has living, an astonishing number of good poets. Of major poets it may have produced no more than has any other

like number of years But all good poetry is not the work of major poets alone A fair percentage of the finest English poetry has sprung from minor poets When I say "minor" I mean neither impostors nor poetasters, I mean good poets who have either not managed to produce in quantity or who have not had great individual influence upon the main stream of English literature

The major poet is almost always a technical innovator, the minor poet utilizes devices already evolved but, in their use, creates poems distinctly his own and thus distinctly valuable I have included many such poems by minor poets because they seem to me to represent their period, as well as being in themselves, as poems, effective

II

*people are exasperated by poetry
which they do not understand, and
contemptuous of poetry which they
understand without effort*

T S ELIOT

READERS' objections to verse are various Not long ago the use of "unpoetic" subject-matter was decried, I doubt if many people are left who raise this particular objection But there is still a rather considerable, and especially vociferous, group who are angered by texturally loaded and technically or semantically complex poetry They impugn it on the ground of obscurity, *i e*, their own inability to understand it It would not be important to take notice of these objectors were it not that they have, firstly, attracted the bulk of the attention which the popular press gives to poetry, and, secondly, that many of them, if they could be persuaded to do some

attentive reading of good verse and good criticism, would quickly lose their hasty prejudice and discover the exhilaration that competently read complex poetry might give them

Poetry is an art that yields its effects to those who are educated in reading it. Skill is almost as essential in reading as in writing. I have often noticed that the loudest in declaiming against the best of our contemporary poets are those who have, in the main, confined their reading of Shakespeare to the Sonnets, of the great English lyric poetry to *The Golden Treasury* and the Victorians, while their inspection of American poetry has been limited to Whitman (and his many imitators) and the Imagists (minus Pound). As to any kind of analysis of poems, they are ignorant. They have never heard of the excellent criticism available which might make them aware of what values to look for in a poem. I have included in this collection several poems sure to irritate this group, but I can assure them that their irritation will give way to pleasure if they will gather up their tolerance and courage and undergo a course of reading of the best poets, old and new, and of the modern critics. They will discover, for instance, that a poet such as Dylan Thomas is not writing obscure private nonsense any more than did John Donne.

Readers who have already made the initial discoveries, and are alert to the subtleties and bits of puzzle that a good poem has to offer, will, I am sure, find much in this *Little Treasury* to please them. Nevertheless, I have some fears that readers most eager to play the kind of game that Empson has to offer will not take kindly to certain of my choices. For I have also included poems very simple in meaning and treatment. Much as I respect the admirable jugglery of several components spun into perfect integration by a poem-maker alive at

all points of the intellect as well as of the senses, my principal criterion for the choice of individual poems was such as admitted many different kinds of verse, whether from the point of view of content or form

III

*And I think that to transfuse emotion
—not to transmut thought but to set up
in the reader's sense a vibration corre-
sponding to what was felt by the writer
—is the peculiar function of poetry*

A E HOUSMAN

WHATEVER the magic of poetry, it exists in the realm of feeling. In that realm each poem has its own organic unity, obeying the laws of its own nature. The natural laws of one poem may vary a good deal from those of another, just as the natural laws of the bee's organism are quite different from those of the cat's. Yet both move about in the same universe, each admirable and complete in its own way. One poem may have a higher kind of being than another, it may have more organs and thus function through a larger body of sensations. But, simple or complex, so long as it is not maimed by the lack of its own peculiar emotional unity, it is a poem.

So I made my basic rule for the choice of poems very simple: if a poem gave me that experience which I have learned comes as a reaction to reading a true poem, I included it, provided it conformed to my space limitations. In other words, I *felt* the poem. My limitations as to length were that most poems must be short, under seventy-five lines if possible, none more than one hundred-and-fifty lines long (with two exceptions to

which I refer in the editorial note that follows this Introduction)

I am sorry that I cannot be explicit in expository terms as to what I mean when I say that I felt or experienced a certain work as a poem. In so far as I know, though many definitions have been offered, no one has ever made a definition of a poem that has been satisfactory to all of the best poets and critics. Some have spoken of their physiological reactions, such as a chill, a sensation in the chest or the pit of the stomach, *etc*, others have used the term "aesthetic emotion" which, to my mind, is just calling the reaction by another name, others have gone very thoroughly into every detail of the poem's construction. But the mystery remains. Something beyond superior craftsmanship enters into the structure of a good poem, and in that something the magic is contained.

Also, opinions differ as to the meaning of "pure" poetry, or as to whether such an expression should be used at all. T. S. Eliot has written, "indeed it might be said in our time that the man who cannot enjoy Pope as poetry probably understands no poetry." On the other hand, Housman, while a great admirer of Pope, would not concede Pope's work or most of the work written in the eighteenth century to be "pure" poetry in the sense that Blake's is.

No two persons are likely to be equally stirred by all of any one list of poems. Every human being has a different complex of associations and will react more or less strongly to the vocabulary or imagery of a particular poet, in accordance with his own psychological nature. If he has critical acumen, he is likely to come pretty close to choosing, as genuine poetry, a majority of the poems that would be chosen by someone else of like acumen, but his rating of individual poems would be different.

Some poems are more richly embellished as to vocabulary, images, phonetic cadences, and the like, while others may be salted with ideas, or ironical, or witty, undecorated and even "dry." One reader may prefer those poems which are romantic and rich in texture, another may look especially for excellences of form. The value of one poem may be predominantly that of its content, that of another of its form or its embellishment. The best poems are those in which form, texture and theme are all in perfect harmony. It is from these last that the reader is most likely to receive the emotional experience closest to that of the poet, or to what the poet intended.

IV

When we read Kipling we can usually say, "That is just how I feel." Of course there is nothing "wrong" with that, but, when we read a great poet, we say, "I never realized before what I felt. From now on, thanks to this poem, I shall feel differently."

W H AUDEN

MOST of us are not given to accuracy when we formulate our thoughts about what we perceive or feel, and we perceive only a small fraction of the world about us, so intent are we upon the business of existence. But the poet is, by the peculiar usefulness of his nature, under a compulsion to be fully accurate in his medium of words when he puts into form his response to a concept or percept. This drive to accuracy causes him to explore the details of his theme and to feel it completely as a whole.

In the process, if he is a good poet, he clarifies in his poem something that has not been fully expressed before. This compelling need for precision also causes a condensation of thought and feeling which loads the poem with its emotional charge. The irrelevant and the expository are not to be found in poetry. The display of the poet is not an explanation or a description of a thing, it is the thing itself. He exhibits the tiger or the dove, he does not tell its habitat, its usefulness or its history, he allows the reader to see for himself what it is.

A poem which shows us a feeling that we have had before may be valuable in that it keeps the emotional faculty alive. As we learn to look for something better, we may outgrow poems like this, but they are a necessary state in our growth and their value for others is not impaired as we pass on to other poetic experiences. There are a few poems of this kind in this book. Since they at one time gave me enjoyment and enlightenment, and as I still realize them as emotional wholes, I have included them.

But the majority of the poems herein present their themes in such fashion as to show fresh ways of feeling or knowing, so they function as nourishment for the *growth* of emotional, or perceptual capacity. Some of them as, for example, *The Waste Land*, have had this effect not only upon readers as individuals, but upon our literary generation as a whole, thus affecting, and developing, the tradition of English poetry itself.

A poem of such magnitude is not quite the result of "inspiration," which is considered by some to be the only authentic source of poetry. Without the "divine fire" no man would be a poet, but without intellect no man would be a great poet. Nor can such a poem be read without the use of an intelligence to some degree comparable with that of the author. Some people object to

the notion that the intellect should be called into operation at all during the reading of a poem They have somehow acquired the idea that feeling and intellect are opposites A little reflection will show that, on the contrary, emotion deepens when the intellect is aroused to action simultaneously with the feeling You cannot feel anything unless your mind is brought to attention upon the idea of it, and the more definitely you think about it, the stronger your emotion is likely to be For instance, if you hear of the death of a friend, you think of him, the clearer your concept of him, the more strongly you are likely to feel If you at the same time begin to ask "Why did he die?" "How did he die?" "What did his life signify?" etc, this very use of analytical thought will deepen your emotion Thus it is with poetry It has many devices for producing a clear emotional experience and those of the intellect are not the least significant

V

*The pleasure is the pleasure of powers
that create a truth that cannot be
arrived at by the reason alone, a truth
that the poet recognizes by sensation
The morality of the poet's radiant and
productive atmosphere is the morality
of the right sensation*

WALLACE STEVENS

MOST of what we may call "educated" humanity, while imbued with respect for science, neglects poetry, considering it not compatible with, or, at least, not directed by, reality Now reason is worthy of all respect, and is nowhere more respected than among poets But

any one avenue of reason may well become a rut No one is more reasonable than the scientist, yet is he not a man who travels an undeviating road with such intentness on his direction that he loses the faculty of turning his head about to see the countryside? The poet knows that life is a whole commingled of reason, instinct and the objective world of *all* phenomena He keeps it knit together by a spiritual understanding which is above reason, which it supervises through virtue of its ability to comprehend all, rather than one segment or function of life Reason is a tool and not an accomplishment, a tool that the poet can on occasion use as well as the scientist Because he is aware of life as a totality, the poet is closer to truth than the scientist and, above all, does surely the right thing at the right time

The scientist discovers, reveals, invents, but is his invention ever produced at the right time in so far as humanity is concerned? If so, it is only by accident and not by insight of the scientist Did radio appear at the exact moment when it would answer a need in the enrichment of the human mind? Or did atomic power? The one came before public taste was educated in the values of music, or was so trained in psychology that it could resist advertising, the other just in time to improve killing instead of leisure No poet would so mistake his timing The poet perceives, he has the right sensation for his hour and he articulates this sensation Moreover, it is only when he is right for his time and communicates the essentials of his time that he is a true poet who will communicate to the ages

Occasionally a poet seems to come too early, he represents not his own time but a later one This might be said of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who is included in this anthology because he was first published in 1918, and has had a profound influence upon poets since that year

Hopkins was born in 1844, as was Robert Bridges, who outlived him by more than forty years. It is to the latter that we owe the miraculous fortune of Hopkins' publication.

From Hopkins' concentrated style we receive a terrific charge of emotion fused with a religious content which had long been lacking in poetry. The advent of this major poetry has, in its effect upon younger poets, extended the resources of poetic technique. But its impetus to new directions in English poetry has been greater than that the younger poets have learned a lesson in the admixture of intelligence with fully expressed emotion, a lesson badly needed. And no less was Hopkins' kind of feeling needed by mankind at that time, and all through the twentieth century. The pity is that mankind rarely has an appetite for what it needs. I doubt if Hopkins really wrote ahead of his time. It was at the precise moment when he was writing his poetry that, had it been accepted by its proper audience, it would have produced the fullest effect. The almost blank period between 1900 and 1910 would have been a little fuller, and the stance of the Georgians would have been less tit-willow.

There is a relation between the state of society and the poet's poem, there is a relationship between the contemporary poet and the contemporary reader, which is exactly right. If people had learned earlier to expose themselves to poetry undoubtedly we should not now be accustomed to contemplating the end of the world as imminent. (Thanks to the atomic bomb today's poets may end the tradition, so they had better be read now.) For the poet is always on the side of life, consistent readers of poetry are also on the side of life. When a poet promulgates the sensuous pleasures he is no less moral than when he paints the hope of heaven, or reveals the truth of tragedy. To be on the side of life is to be moral.

VI

Poetry is the supreme form of
EMOTIVE language

I A RICHARDS

THE direct intensity of Hopkins' passion was set into verse before most of the other poems in this anthology were written. Such utterance as his was impossible to poets who wrote between his time and the nineteen-thirties. Feeling was not rushed forth in such a way as to take us by storm. Hardy's realism, Bridges' deliberation, Edith Sitwell's artifacts (in America, Marianne Moore's syllabic patterns and Wallace Stevens' colourful irony) had not this kind of direct expression. Both the Georgians with their claim of writing from pure feeling and the Imagists with theirs of recording pure percepts, seem to us now not to have expressed emotion at all. The poetry of Wilfred Owen, another innovator of major importance, releases the impact of its feeling with a kind of delayed action. It is not until the advent in the middle 'thirties of such poets as George Barker and Dylan Thomas that we find emotion again released immediately and directly. In Hart Crane there is, however, a rising curve of such release.

We can now clearly see the mounting graph of intensity as it passed through the poetry of the first half of the twentieth century, nourished by increments of the intelligence, which presents the issues of reality, and of the creative imagination, which expands the sensibility. This increase and this clarification are exemplified in the work of a single poet, W. B. Yeats, who was born in 1865 and lived to 1939. Yeats' verse began with the weakly esotericism of the 'nineties and developed to a

full expression of the poetic strength of his period, a period when poetry took cognizance, for the first time in the history of that period, of the whole situation of mankind as well as of individual experience

Oddly enough the round outflow of direct passion seems to have become again possible to poets in general only after the development of the other, and greater, new impetus given to poetry in our time. This new direction was, of course, that given by T. S. Eliot, to whom twentieth-century literature is so greatly indebted, not only for poetry of the very first order, but also for criticism without which we cannot help feeling we should be as though blind. Mr. Eliot made poets and readers alike aware of the fundamental importance of intelligence in both the making and appraisal of poems. Ezra Pound helped to sharpen the wits and scholarship of talented poets. But, except upon the highly gifted few, the knowledge of Eliot's and Pound's complexity might well have had the stultifying effect of drying up the juices of feeling by an overdose of erudition. Hopkins' influence has balanced this tendency without reducing respect for intelligence. It would be almost impossible for minor verse so devoid of real values as that of the Georgians to "get by" today.

My belief that the emotional unity of a poem is of primary importance determined the arrangement of this anthology. I might have put the poems in chronological order, which might be called an historical arrangement. Instead I have placed them according to theme, such as Mortality, Love, War, *etc.* Readers interested in placing each poet in time will find his dates listed in the Index of Authors, those wanting to see at a glance any particular poet's representation will find it in the same index. Any one poet may have several poems scattered throughout the book, but I believe that in a volume designed as

this one is, for easy carrying about and use at odd moments, it is more convenient to have the poems divided in such a way that the reader can quickly find a poem to fit his mood or the pleasure of the moment, than to have them arranged more matter-of-factly

The intention behind their classification into emotional divisions, was not to bundle individual poems together as if they were chapters of a story about the theme, but simply to place them in proximity. It is, of course, impossible to pass from one poem to the next as if each continued the same thought as the one preceding it. Every poem makes its own entity of its own internal factors, without relation to any other poem. To read along instantaneously from one to the next would be to amputate the magic of the first and be blunt to the magic of the second.

VII

*The rhetorician would deceive his neighbors,
The sentimentalist himself, while art
Is but a vision of reality*

W B YEATS

WITHOUT doubt some readers will miss some poems which they like, or have been taught to admire, and object to their omission. I may say bluntly that there are some poets whom I consider spurious in spite of their having achieved a full measure of popularity or of acceptance by the schools. Sham poems do not deserve to lie alongside the pages graced by the real thing. If any such have slipped past my guard I do not know it.

The poetasters and the sentimentalists are always with us, serious readers are not likely to be deceived by them. But even competent critics are occasionally taken in by

the skilful rhetorician The term "academic" is generally applied to work easy to spot from its very dullness However, the true academic is that literary figure who confuses his contemporaries by displaying a mock talent wrapped in the cellophane of rhetoric that obeys all the rules, even to the simulation of the faults of the best poets But a watchful eye can spy the academic no matter how quick his leap into the devices of the great Even if he is as fast as Superman there are a few simple characteristics of the careerist that cannot be hidden He absorbs the most talked about traits of a model Then he adds characteristics from this great poet and that (provided always that the poets he imitates are those most recently lauded), patches out a style for himself, and achieves a career by the same strategy that men in other fields achieve careers by This academic is the most subtle and dangerous of the enemies of art He penetrates everywhere, since he is an accomplished salesman of his personality, his line is almost erudite and his morals lacking in the one essential morality of the real poet the kind of honesty that can understand its own heart The academic is likely to know everything there is to know about poetry except its essence, his critical acumen consists in waiting until he hears another voice recommending

Good poets have their influences and models, true, but of these they make a distinctive integer, the academic borrows without respecting Appropriating someone else's possession is not the same thing as endeavouring to model oneself after another man's admired character Nor does the rhetorician present us with simple pastiche, he flourishes something slicker than that it shines but has no heat, the dress is stolen but worn with such effrontery you might think it his own I have done my best to keep this impostor out of good company

Other omissions I have made upon the ground that certain writings look like poetry, have passed as poetry, but are demonstrably not so, among their authors are certain members of past "schools," the Imagists, *etc*. A few poets, whom I willingly concede to be genuine since they have had the right effect upon people whose sensitivity I respect, I myself have been unable to "feel" and so could not persuade myself to include

As I have said above, many long poems of importance are not in the collection. If the design of this anthology were to represent the stature and range of the most significant modern poets, an altogether different kind of book would have resulted. In order to fully represent Eliot and Yeats, for instance, I should have had to include Eliot's later work (some of *The Four Quartets*) as well as his earlier, and Yeats' earlier work along with his later. Many of the excellent short pieces by minor figures would have had to be dropped, and relatively few names would make up the contents.

So this *Little Treasury* is not a means of expressing my opinion upon the comparative statures of the poets of the twentieth century. The stricture of shortness in number of lines would, of itself, prevent the amount of page representation of any one poet from being an indication of my evaluation of his rank. And even if I should have the temerity to make such an evaluation, it would remain one man's opinion. A perfect judge would have to be a keen and unprejudiced critic with pre-knowledge of the standards of posterity. I am not so prophetic, and never unprejudiced, my judgments are always arrived at through the medium of my own taste, *i.e.*, what I am activated into liking.

VIII

*It is a fact that both an epic and a
limerick are poems You can only
distinguish in them differences of
effect and quality*

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

Now I like high and serious poetry to such a degree that I cannot imagine life worth living without it, but for that very reason I like light verse also it is poetry at play It is significant that so important a poet as Auden should have found it well within his concept of poetry to write light verse Indeed, a considerable body of his writing has been in this category No one can completely understand the character of poetry unless he sees it in all its aspects, just as he cannot understand a friend unless he sees him having fun as often as he sees him serious Our century has not been an easy one and its hard circumstances are reflected in the fact that the percentage of light verse of quality which it has produced is small, and the percentage of serious verse, large Yet we have had enough of it, I believe, to warrant my inclusion of a section of this poetry at play

Exactly what makes a poem "light" is hard to define, but I shall give some of my own thoughts about the matter Light verse might be defined quite as, in drama, comedy is defined, as a form which takes the accepted social *mores* for granted, a means of expression that gives a sense of security because it never lets in the notion of that outer chaos and questionability of fundamental axioms which tragedy presents

Light verse is not necessarily funny or entertaining, it can have a serious content and purpose It is play partly

because it is very consciously constructed, but play is not always laughter-provoking, witness the football game. But it can be very funny indeed. It utilizes, to produce its effects, pun and satire, metre and nonsense, and other effective devices. Some light verse is farce and we enjoy it as such.

It is interesting to try to trace the methods which recur as a kind of principle in the making of such poetry. Light verse is written in a familiar, everyday kind of speech. It often makes outrageous statements in the off-hand tone of a housewife discussing the most commonplace details of daily life. For instance

*Billy, in one of his nice new sashes,
Fell in the fire and was burned to ashes,
Now, although the room grows chilly,
I haven't the heart to poke poor Billy*

In "Billy," the announcement is made that the child met a horrible death and the poet goes on with the most matter-of-fact, everyday air to comment on this tragedy as if not poking Billy's ashes were on the same level as giving him a piece of candy. "I haven't the heart to refuse him." But this quatrain is "light" also because it shows, by the very point it makes in showing that it is nonsense, complete agreement with our social *mores*, in this instance that it is so bad a crime to kill or be callous to children that even to think of such a thing is funny. The ancients who exposed unwanted babies to die would not have considered this thought nonsense.

The same principle is behind the funniness of Miss Twye (page 601). If our women were accustomed to taking their baths in mixed company, which they say is a Japanese custom, the point of the situation would not exist, even if the matter-of-fact tone were present.

We are also amused by over-emphasis of the trivial or

by under-emphasis of the large I have included curses, tirades, satires and other poems that illustrate this principle. When we hear Pound curse out the rain, we enjoy having the weather get the attention that it wouldn't get if we really were the noble creatures we sometimes like to think ourselves. So much rage at a little discomfort makes us smile over the fallibility of humans. When we hear ANON discuss the merits of being either a rooster or a crow (page 569) with the absolute assumption that he might become either with the seriousness of a man choosing a career, it is the attitude more than the homely speech that furnishes the fun.

IX

To maintain gaiety at a definite level of taste is as difficult and requires as much composed unity of approach and as mature an attitude towards the material as is required to maintain fury or disgust. Gaiety, and especially gaiety in finished form, is the last thing to be caught in a formula of facility.

R P BLACKMUR

BUT, even in light verse, not every attempt that follows the rules is poetry. Light verse may be written more by wit and cynicism than by inspiration, yet the point it makes and the style it dons must be in agreement, the joke or flavour sharp enough to retain its freshness and please a quick mind. Children are fond of puns, no matter what, but adults will not tolerate bad ones.

There is a certain kind of ostensibly funny rhyming which is generally referred to as "society" verse. It is

favoured by newspapers and the lay public that likes to try its hand at stanzaic humour. Some of its prototypes have been good, Gilbert is an example. I have avoided most of this material because it exercises neither the mind nor the funny-bone. One imperative of humour is to engage the mind. In Ogden Nash's

Candy
Is dandy
But liquor
Is quicker

the reader must complete the thought for himself. So too in *Head and Heart* by C. D. B. Ellis. It is not enough for the rhymes themselves to be funny. Neither does the use of dialect or slang constitute genuinely humorous poetry.

A few readers may object to my placing certain poems in the light, instead of the serious, verse section. But a little thought about each will give them the clue as to why I did so. The poems which comment upon the social scene may especially seem to them not of proper content for this classification. But it is the poet's rôle to speak for the issues of the day in whatever tone he finds fitting, the greater the range of tones, the more fully will poetry perform this one of its functions.

X

*no one comes so near the invisible
world as the sage and the poet, unless
it be the saint—who is but one spirit
with God, and so infinitely closer to
Him than anyone. I also point out the
benefits men receive from poetry
Though in themselves of no help to*

6
*the attainment of eternal life, art and
poetry are more necessary than bread
to the human race They fit it for the
life of the spirit*

JACQUES MARITAIN

THE majority of mankind today knows nothing of poetry, the name for them means highfalutin, doggerel. The educated minority is, during school days, exposed to poetry instead of being inoculated with it. For this art is neither an extraneous growth upon the pragmatic activity which has become so universally synonymous with existence, nor an obsolete organ like the appendix. On the contrary, it is the ichor which man's spiritual nature secretes for the purpose of healing the kind of wounds from which we today suffer. Just as medical science used to make the mistake of draining off the very blood needed to restore health, modern society is ever busy trying to dry up the real essence of the arts, because their usefulness has been forgotten and not rediscovered.

The poet has a high and responsible position to fill in the complex of society. Humanity's ignorance of this necessity, and some others, has directly led to the terrible distortion of the whole social mechanism, which is so misdirected that its energies rush to the end of universal murder instead of maintaining the precise balance of natural and enjoyable living for all. Almost perfunctory statements of alarm over the use of the atomic bomb barely conceal a fundamental indifference to its threat, or what must follow from the fulfilment of that threat. All the elaborate inventiveness of man has been turned to manipulation of the inanimate, human emotions would have responded as miraculously to a like well-developed technique of expansion and control.

Poetry explores the possibilities of emotion, couples its

niceties with thought, and thereby creates a kind of discipline for the whole man, not neglecting his physical nature And poetry is made by the poet, much more definitively made by an individual man than any other product, except those of the other arts Presidents and scientists are honoured although they function only as part of a group, and their product is ephemeral in that it is sure to be quickly replaced by a better This is probably because the apparent benefits received from politicians and scientists need only be accepted, the salutary delights of poetry must be worked for if the reader is to have them The poet is doing enough to prepare the way for the millennium He mitigates none of his own suffering, as he refuses no labour, to bring up, from what to-day is an abyss not pleasant to enter, the poems that would nourish man back to fullness of health

XI

*The world grown wiser is its wisdom
gone The machines are working but
we have lost the arts Our degradation
spreads along the winds There is no
corner of the world that is not sullied
with our news*

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

BUT, unless the human heart can cleanse itself faster than the laboratory can manufacture its hell-fire, it is now too late Eyes trained to mere spectacle are not attracted by the sunny landscape of the spirit but find the sun more dazzling in the absolute of an atomic explosion Almost no rôles except those of Jeremiah and Cassandra are left to saint and poet, and even they must

be played in the wings The audience insists upon chief actors who are senseless enough to perform a cataclysm

However, we must continue to set life into form Readers of poetry, no less than its makers, have an urgent task to create a focus of understanding Since with God all things are possible, poets and readers in unison may still work their own miracle by which the human heart may yet so enlarge that it outweighs the atomic bomb

OSCAR WILLIAMS

New York City,
January 2, 1946

Editorial Note

Most of the poems herein are under seventy-five lines long and none over one hundred and fifty lines with two exceptions *The Waste Land* by T S Eliot and *The Hound of Heaven* by Francis Thompson As to *The Waste Land*, so markedly over my length limit, it need scarcely be pointed out that no collection of modern poetry could be even moderately representative without this chief of its works *The Hound of Heaven* was not too much over my limit, it seemed to me to be well worth a slight deviation from my general rules, although it also broke my rule as to time of publication (1896 to the present) Other exceptions to this rule are poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins, excepted because they were published and highly influential in the modern period, the work of Emily Dickinson, who, although she lived and died in the nineteenth century, was not really known until the twentieth, in the light verse section a poem by W S Gilbert and certain anonymous poems whose dates, because of anonymity, were difficult to ascertain and may therefore slightly antedate the period

I
*A Little Treasury
of
Modern Poetry*

GOD'S GRANDEUR

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil,
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod,
And all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil,
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod*

*And for all this, nature is never spent,
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things,
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

PIED BEAUTY

GLORY be to God for dappled things—

For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow,

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim,
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls, finches' wings,

Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and
plough,

And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim

All things counter, original, spare, strange,

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim,
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change
Praise him

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

SPRING

NOTHING is so beautiful as spring—

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush,

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightning to hear him sing,

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush

The descending blue, that blue is all in a rush

With richness, the racing lambs too have fair their fling

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden —Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE STARLIGHT NIGHT

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!

O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!

The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!

Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!

The gray lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!

Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!

Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!

Ah, well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms,
vows

Look, look a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!

Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow
sallows!

These are indeed the barn, withindoors house

The shocks This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse

Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE CAGED SKYLARK

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house,
dwells—

That bird beyond the remembering his free fells,
This in drudgery, day-laboring-out life's age

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest—
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his
nest,

But his own nest, wild nest, no prison

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
But uncumbered meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE WINDHOVER

To Christ Our Lord

I CAUGHT this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Fal-
con, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and
striding

High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling
wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend the
hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind My heart in hiding
Sturred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the
thing!

Brute beauty and valor and act, oh, air, pride, plume,
here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a
billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

AS KINGFISHERS CATCH FIRE, DRAGONFLIES DRAW FLAME

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame,
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring, like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name,
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells,
Selves—goes itself, *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me for that I came*

I say móre the just man justices,
Keeps grace that keeps all his goings graces,
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is—
Christ—for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days,
I fled Him, down the arches of the years,
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter
Up vistaed hopes I sped,
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me”

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,

Yet was I sore adread
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside),
 But, if one little casement parted wide,
 The gust of His approach would clash it to
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue
 Across the margent of the world I fled,
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
 Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars,
 Fretted to dulcet jars
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon
 I said to Dawn Be sudden—to Eve Be soon,
 With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
 From this tremendous Lover—
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find
 My own betrayal in their constancy,
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue,
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
 The long savannahs of the blue,
 Or whether, Thunder-driven,
 They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
 feet —
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue
 Still with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 Came on the following Feet,
 And a Voice above their beat—
 “Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me”

I sought no more that after which I strayed

In face of man or maid,
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully,
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship,
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring"
So it was done
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies
I knew all the swift importings
On the willful face of skies,
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumed of the wild sea-snothings,
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with, made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine,
With them joyed and was bereaven
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities
I laughed in the morning's eyes

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine,

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat,
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I, in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth,
Let her, if she would owe me
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me"

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee,
I am defenseless utterly
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me, grinned with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—

My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist,
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding, cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy briefs so overplused

Ah! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with
it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust,
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-dripping stagnate, split down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind

Such is, what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds,
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpse'd turrets slowly wash again

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned,
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit,
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fleest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me"

FRANCIS THOMPSON

WHAT THOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I SAW God Do you doubt it?
Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all about it
I saw Him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it

He was not satisfied,
His look was all dissatisfied
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied"

He lifted up His hand—
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth Then I said, "Stay,
You must not strike it, God, I'm in the way,
And I will never move from where I stand"
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And staved His hand

JAMES STEPHENS

LOVELIEST OF TREES

LOVELIEST of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow

A E HOUSMAN

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I LEANED upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings from broken lyres,

And all mankind that haunted night
Had sought their household fires

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I

At once a voice burst forth among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited,
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware

THOMAS HARDY

Dec 31, 1900

IN THE NAKED BED, IN PLATO'S CAVE

IN the naked bed, in Plato's cave,
Reflected headlights slowly slid the wall,
Carpenters hammered under the shaded window,
Wind troubled the window curtains all night long,
A fleet of trucks strained uphill, grinding,
Their freights covered, as usual
The ceiling lightened again, the slanting diagram
Slid slowly forth

Hearing the milkman's chop,
His striving up the stair, the bottle's chunk,
I rose from bed, lit a cigarette,
And walked to the window The stony street
Displayed the stillness in which buildings stand,
The street-lamp's vigil and the horse's patience
The winter sky's pure capital
Turned me back to bed with exhausted eyes

Strangeness grew in the motionless air The loose
Film grayed Shaking wagons, hooves' waterfalls,
Sounded far off, increasing, louder and nearer
A car coughed, starting Morning, softly
Melting the air, lifted the half-covered chair
From underseas, kindled the looking-glass,
Distinguished the dresser and the white wall
The bird called tentatively, whistled, called,
Bubbled and whistled, so! Perplexed, still wet
With sleep, affectionate, hungry and cold So, so,
O son of man, the ignorant night, the travail
Of early morning, the mystery of beginning
Again and again,

while History is unforgiven

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

DISCOVERIES

THE poles are flying where the two eyes set
America has not found Columbus yet

Ptolemy's planets, playing fast and loose,
Foretell the wisdom of Copernicus

Dante calls Primum Mobile, the First Cause
Love that moves the world and the other stars

Great Galileo, twisted by the rack,
Groans the bright sun from heaven, then breathes it back

Blake, on the world alighting, holds the skies,
And all the stars shine down through human eyes

Donne sees those stars, yet will not let them lie
'We're tapers, too, and at our own cost die'

The shroud-lamp catches Lips are smiling there
'Les flammes—deja?'—The world dies, or Voltaire

Swift, a cold mourner at his burial-rite,
Burns to the world's heart like a meteorite

Beethoven deaf, in deafness hearing all,
Unwinds all music from sound's funeral

Three prophets fall, the litter of one night,
Blind Milton gazes in fixed deeps of light

Beggar of those Minute Particulars,
Yeats lights again the turmoil of the stars

Motionless motion! Come, Tiresias,
The eternal flies, what's passing cannot pass

'Solace in flight,' old Heraclitus cries,
Light changing to Von Hugel's butterflies

Rilke bears all, thinks like a tree, believes,
Sinks in the hand that bears the falling leaves

The stars! The signs! Great Angelo hurls them back
His whirling ceiling draws the zodiac

The pulse of Keats testing the axiom,
The second music when the sound is dumb

The Christian Paradox, bringing its great reward
By loss, the moment known to Kierkegaard

VERNON WATKINS

NOT PALACES, AN ERA'S CROWN

NOT palaces, an era's crown
Where the mind dreams, intrigues, rests,
The architectural gold-leaved flower
From people ordered like a single mind,
I build This only what I tell
It is too late for rare accumulation,
For family pride, for beauty's filtered dusts,
I say, stamping the words with emphasis,
Drink from here energy and only energy,
As from the electric charge of a battery,
To will this time's change

Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,
Drinker of horizon's fluid line,
Ear that suspends on a chord
The spirit drinking timelessness,
Touch, love—all senses—
Leave your gardens, your singing feasts,
Your dreams of suns circling before our sun,
Of heaven after our world
Instead, watch images of flashing brass
That strike the outward sense, the polished will,
Flag of our purpose which the wind engraves
No spirit seek here rest But this No man
Shall hunger, Man shall spend equally
Our goal which we compel Man shall be man

The program of the antique Satan
Bristling with guns on the indented page,
With battleship towering from hilly waves
For what? Drive of a running purpose,
Destroying all but its age-long exploiters
Our program like this, yet opposite
Death to the killers, bringing light to life -

STEPHEN SPENDER

MORNING SONG OF SENLIN

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops

Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie

Vine leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones

It is morning I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair
How small and white my face!—
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember god?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair
Accept these humble offerings, cloud of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair

Vine leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones,
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep

The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains
It is morning I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more,
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor

It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where,
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones

CONRAD AIKEN

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE BIRD

In the beginning was the bird,
A spume of feathers on the face of time,
Man's model for destruction, God's defence

Before man, a bird, a feather before time,
And music growing outward into space,
The feathered shears cutting dreams in air

Before birds, a God, a Nothing with a shape
More horrible than mountains or the Plague,
A Voice as large as fate, a tongue of bronze

Before this, O no before was there
Where? Among the placeless atoms, mad
As tale the maggot makes locked in the skull

And so I state a bird For sanity
My brain's lips blow the tumbled plume
I see the prophesy the path winds take

HENRY TREECE

THE CRYSTAL

WITH burning fervour
I am forever
Turning in my hand
The crystal, this moment

Whose spatial glitter
Travelling erratically
Forward

Touches with permanent
Disturbance the pavements
The faked walls the crevices
Of futurity

Sooner than darken
This crystal miracle
With a hand's
Vagary

One would dis sever
This wrist this hand,
Or remove the eyelid
To see the end

GEORGE BARKER

ROOSTERS

At four o'clock
in the gun-metal blue dark
we hear the first crow of the first cock

just below
the gun-metal blue window
and immediately there is an echo

off in the distance,
then one from the back-yard fence,
then one, with horrible insistence,

grates like a wet match
from the broccoli patch,
flares, and all over town begins to catch

Cries galore
come from the water-closet door,
from the dropping-plastered hen-house floor,

where in the blue blurr
their rustling wives admire,
the roosters brace their cruel feet and glare

with stupid eyes
while from their beaks there rise
the uncontrolled, traditional cries

Deep from protruding chests
in green-gold medals dressed,
planned to command and terrorize the rest,

the many wives
who lead hens' lives
of being courted and despised,

deep from raw throats
a senseless order floats
all over town A rooster gloats

over our beds
from rusty iron sheds
and fences made from old bed-steads,

over our churches
where the tin rooster perches,
over our little wooden northern houses,

making sallies
from all the muddy alleys,
marking out maps like Rand MacNally's

glass-headed pins,
oil-golds and copper-greens,
anthracite blues, alizarins,

each one an active
displacement in perspective,
each screaming, "This is where I live!"

Each screaming
"Get up! Stop dreaming!"
Roosters, what are you projecting?

You, whom the Greeks elected
to shoot at on a post, who struggled
when sacrificed, you whom they labelled

"Very combative "
what right have you to give
commands, and tell us how to live,

cry "Here!" and "Here!"
and wake us here where are
unwanted love, conceit, and war?

The crown of red
set on your little head
is charged with all your fighting-blood

Yes, that excrescence
makes a most virile presence,
plus all that vulgar beauty of iridescence

Now in mid-air
by twos they fight each other
Down comes a first flame-feather,

and one is flying,
with raging heroism defying
even the sensation of dying

And one has fallen,
but still above the town
his torn-out, bloodied feathers drift down,

and what he sung
no matter He is flung
on the gray ash-heap, lies in dung

with his dead wives
with open, bloody eyes,
while those metallic feathers oxidize

St Peter's sin
was worse than that of Magdalen
whose sin was of the flesh alone,

of spirit, Peter's,
falling, beneath the flares,
among the "servants and officers"

Old holy sculpture
could set it all together
in one small scene, past and future

Christ stands amazed,
Peter, two fingers raised
to surprised lips, both as if dazed

But in between
a little cock is seen
carved on a dim column in the travertine

explained by *Gallus Camt*,
Flet Petrus underneath it
There is inescapable hope, the pivot,

yes, and there Peter's tears
run down our chancicleer's
sides and gem his spurs

Tear-encrusted thick
as a medieval relic
he waits Poor Peter, heart-sick,

still cannot guess
those cock-a-doodles yet might bless,
his dreadful rooster come to mean forgiveness,

a new weathervane
on basilica and barn,
and that outside the Lateran

there would always be
a bronze cock on a porphyry
pillar so the people and the Pope might see

that even the Prince
of the Apostles long since
had been forgiven, and to convince

all the assembly
that "Deny deny deny,"
is not all the roosters cry

In the morning
a low light is floating
in the back-yard, and gilding

from underneath
the broccoli, leaf by leaf,
how could the night have come to grief?

gilding the tiny
floating swallow's belly
and lines of pink cloud in the sky,

the day's preamble
like wandering lines in marble
The cocks are now almost inaudible

The sun climbs in,
following "to see the end,"
faithful as enemy, or friend

ELIZABETH BISHOP

SOCRATES' GHOST MUST HAUNT ME NOW

SOCRATES' ghost must haunt me now,
Notorious death has let him go,
He comes to me with a clumsy bow,
Saying in his disused voice,
That I do not know I do not know,
The mechanical whims of appetite
Are all that I have of conscious choice,

The butterfly caged in electric light
Is my only day in the world's great night,
Love is not love, it is a child
Sucking his thumb and biting his lip,
But grasp it all, there may be more!
From the topless sky to the bottomless floor
With the heavy head and the fingertip
All is not blind, obscene, and poor
Socrates stands by me stockstill,
Teaching hope to my flickering will,
Pointing to the sky's inexorable blue
—Old Noumenon, come true, come true!

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

'A COLD coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter'
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices
A hard time we had of it

At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation,
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the
darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place, it was (you may say) satisfactory

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt I had seen birth and
death,
But had thought they were different, this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods
I should be glad of another death

T S ELIOT

Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman,
the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and
cold,

And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay—
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys,
it was air

And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the
nightjars

Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder it
was all

Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day

So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking
warm

Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay
house

Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was
long,

In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,

My wishes raced through the house-high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time
allows

In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would
take me

Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my
hand,

In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep

I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless
land

Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea

DYLAN THOMAS

THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age, that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood, that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand, that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime

The lips of time leech to the fountain head,
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm

DYLAN THOMAS

A COAT

I MADE my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat,
But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought it
Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked

W B YEATS

TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO NOTHING

Now all the truth is out,
Be secret and take defeat
From any brazen throat,
For how can you compete,
Being honour bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies,
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbours' eyes?
Bred to a harder thing
Than Triumph, turn away
And like a laughing string
Whereon mad fingers play
Amid a place of stone,
Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult

W B YEATS

COUNTRY SUMMER

Now the rich cherry whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced,
Like a strict box its gems encased,
Has spilt from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round,
Those melting rubies which it hid,
With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry
To taste that deep-red lark's-bite berry,
And blackcap-bloom is yellow-dusted

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,
And side by side with the wren's brood,—
O lovely time of beggars' luck—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud
And full and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house
But all night nibble under boughs,
Or cool their sides in the moist field

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm-baking smell blows round,
Inside and out and sky and ground
Are much the same, the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early-born,
Is risen only finger-far
All stars stand close in summer air,
And tremble, and look mild as amber;
When wicks are lighted in the chamber
You might say stars were settling there

Now straightening from the flowery hay,
Down the still light the mowers look,
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,
And they waked half to other days,
When left alone in yellow-stubble,
The rusty-coated mare would graze
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born,
Another thought can come to mind,
But like the shivering of the wind,
Morning and evening in the corn

LÉONIE ADAMS

A SUMMER COMMENTARY

WHEN I was young, with sharper sense,
The farthest insect cry I heard
Could stay me, through the trees, intense,
I watched the hunter and the bird

Where is the meaning that I found?
Or was it but a state of mind,
Some old penumbra of the ground,
In which to be but not to find?

Now summer grasses, brown with heat,
Have crowded sweetness through the air,
The very roadside dust is sweet,
Even the unshadowed earth is fair

The soft voice of the nesting dove,
And the dove in soft erratic flight

Like a rapid hand within a glove,
Caress the silence and the light

Amid the rubble, the fallen fruit,
Fermenting in its rich decay,
Smears brandy on the trampling boot
And sends it sweeter on its way

YVOR WINTERS

THE ROAD

THERE is a road that turning always
Cuts off the country of Again
Archers stand there on every side
And as it runs Time's deer is slain,
And lies where it has lain

That busy clock shows never an hour
All flies and all in flight must tarry
The hunter shoots the empty air
Far on before the quarry,
Which falls though nothing's there to parry.

The lion couching in the centre
With mountain head and sunset brow
Rolls down the everlasting slope
Bones picked an age ago,
And the bones rise up and go

There the beginning finds the end
Before beginning ever can be,
And the great runner never leaves
The starting and the finishing tree,
The budding and the fading tree

There the ship sailing safe in harbour
Long since in many a sea was drowned
The treasure burning in her hold
So near will never be found,
Sunk past all sound

There a man on a summer evening
Reclines at ease upon his tomb
And is his mortal effigy
And there within the womb,
The cell of doom,

The ancestral deed is thought and done,
And in a million Edens fall
A million Adams drowned in darkness
For small is great and great is small,
And a blind seed all

EDWIN MUIR

NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

In that land all Is and nothing's Ought;
No owners or notices, only birds,
No walls anywhere, only lean wire of words
Worming brokenly out from eaten thought

No oats growing, only ankle-lace grass
Easing and not resenting the feet that pass,
No enormous beasts, only names of them,
No bones made, bans laid, or boons expected,
No contracts, entails, hereditaments,
Anything at all that might tie or hem

In that land all's lackadaisical,
No lakes of coddled spawn, and no locked ponds
Of settled purpose, no netted fishes,
But only inkling streams and running fronds,
Fritillared with dreams, weedy with wishes,
Nor arrogant talk is heard, haggling phrase,
But undertones, and hesitance, and haze,
On clear days mountains of meaning are seen
Humped high on the horizon, no one goes
To con their meaning, no one cares or knows

In that land all's flat, indifferent, there
Is neither springing house nor hanging tent,
No aims are entertained, and nothing is meant,
For there are no ends and no trends, no roads,
Only follow your nose to anywhere
No one is born there, no one stays or dies,
For it is a timeless land, it lies
Between the act and the attrition, it
Marks off bound from rebound, make from break, tit
From tat, also to-day from to-morrow
No Cause there comes to term, but each departs
Elsewhere to whelp its deeds, expel its darts,
There are no homecomings, of course, no good-byes
In that land, neither yearning nor scorning,
Though at night there is the smell of morning

W R RODGERS

INTERRUPTION

IF ever against this easy blue and silver
Hazed-over countryside of thoughtfulness
Far behind in the mind and above,
Boots from before and below approach tramping,
Watch how their premonition will display
A forward countryside, low in the distance,
A picture-postcard square of June grass,
Will warm a summer season, trim the hedges,
Cast the river about on either flank,
Start the late cuckoo emptily calling,
Invent a rambling tale of moles and voles,
Furnish a path with stiles
Watch how the field will broaden, the feet nearing
Sprout with great dandelions and buttercups,
Widen and heighten The blue and silver
Fogs at the border of this all-grass
Interruption looms gigantified,
Lurches against, treads thundering through,
Blots the landscape, scatters all,
Roars and rumbles like a dark tunnel,
Is gone

The picture-postcard grass and trees
Swim back to central it is a large patch,
It is a modest, failing patch of green,
The postage-stamp of its departure,
Clouded with blue and silver, closing in now
To a plain countryside of less and less,
Unpeopled and unfeathered blue and silver,
Before, behind, above

ROBERT GRAVES

MIRAGE

THE wind was in another country, and
the day had gathered to its heart of noon
the sum of silence, heat, and stricken time
Not a ripple spread The sea mirrored
perfectly all the nothing in the sky
We had to walk about to keep our eyes
from seeing nothing, and our hearts from stopping
at nothing Then most suddenly we saw
horizon on horizon lifting up
out of the sea's edge a shining mountain
sun-yellow and sea-green, against it surf
flung spray and spume into the miles of sky
Somebody said mirage, and it was gone,
but there I have been living ever since

R P BLACKMUR

YON FAR COUNTRY

INTO my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again

A E HOUSMAN

THE LEGS

THERE was this road,
And it led up-hill,
And it led down-hill,
And round and in and out

And the traffic was legs,
Legs from the knees down,
Coming and going,
Never pausing

And the gutters gurgled
With the rain's overflow,
And the sticks on the pavement
Blindly tapped and tapped

What drew the legs along
Was the never-stopping,
And the senseless, frightening
Fate of being legs

Legs for the road,
The road for legs,
Resolutely nowhere
In both directions

My legs at least
Were not in that rout
On grass by the road-side
Entire I stood,

Watching the unstoppable '
Legs go by
With never a stumble
Between step and step

Though my smile was broad
The legs could not see,
Though my laugh was loud
The legs could not hear

My head dizzied, then
I wondered suddenly,
Might I too be a walker
From the knees down?

Gently I touched my shins
The doubt unchained them
They had run in twenty puddles
Before I regained them

ROBERT GRAVES

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door,
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor,
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head,

And he smote upon the door again a second time,
"Is there anybody there?" he said
But no one descended to the Traveller,
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky,
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head
"Tell them I came, and no one answered
That I kept my word," he said
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone

WALTER DE LA MARE

ROMANCE

WHEN I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi,
Took me by the hand

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatepetl
In the sunlight gleams

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away

I walked in a great golden dream
The town streets, to and fro—
Shining Popocatepetl
Gleamed with his cap of snow

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my breath away

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatepetl,
It was thy magic hour

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi,
They had stolen my soul away!

W J TURNER

BEREFT

WHERE had I heard this wind before
Change like this to a deeper roar?
What would it take my standing there for,
Holding open a restive door,
Looking down hill to a frothy shore?
Summer was past and day was past
Sombre clouds in the west were massed
Out in the porch's sagging floor,
Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,
Blindly struck at my knee and missed
Something sinister in the tone
Told me my secret must be known
Word I was in the house alone
Somehow must have gotten abroad,
Word I was in my life alone,
Word I had no one left but God

ROBERT FROST

SNOW

THE room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window
was
Spawning snow and pink roses against it

Soundlessly collateral and incompatible
World is suddener than we fancy it

World is crazier and more of it than we think,
Incorrigibly plural I peel and portion
A tangerine and spit the pips and feel
The drunkenness of things being various

And the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world
Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes—
On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of
your hands—
There is more than glass between the snow and the huge
roses

LOUIS MACNEICE

AJANTA

NOTE In India, between the second century B C and the sixth century A D, a school of Buddhist painter-monks worked on the walls of the Ajanta caves, keeping a tradition in painting that was lost in the East after them and never known in the West Based on the religious analogy between the space of the body and the space of the universe, the treatment of bodies in these scenes of the life of the gods is such that the deepest background is the wall on which the paintings are done—the figures, in the round but shadowless, start forward, seeming to fill the cave Reality is fully accepted, then, the function of such an art is to fill with creation an accepted real world

CAME in my full youth to the midnight cave
nerves ringing, and this thing I did alone
Wanting my fulness and not a field of war,
for the world considered annihilation, a star
called Wormwood rose and flickered, shattering
bent light over the dead boiling up in the ground,
the biting yellow of their corrupted lives
streaming to war, denying all our words

Nothing was left among the tainted weather
but world-walking and the shadowless Ajanta
Hallucination and the metal laugh
in clouds, and the mountain-spectre riding storm
Nothing was certain but a moment of peace,
a hollow behind the unbreakable waterfall
All the way to the cave, the teeming forms of death,
and death, the price of the body, cheap as air
I blessed my heart on the expiation journey
for it had never been unable to suffer
when I met the man whose face looked like the future,
when I met the whore with the dying red hair,
the child myself who is my murderer
So came I between heaven and my grave
past the serene smile of the *voyeur*, to
this cave where the myth enters the heart again

II THE CAVE

Space to the mind, the painted cave of dream
This is not a womb, nothing but good emerges
this is a stage, neither unreal nor real
where the walls are the world, the rocks and palaces
stand on a borderland of blossoming ground
If you stretch your hand, you touch the slope of the
world
reaching in interlaced gods, animals, and men
There is no background The figures hold their peace
in a web of movement There is no frustration,
every gesture is taken, everything yields connections
The heavy sensual shoulders, the thighs, the blood-born
flesh
and earth turning into color, rocks into their crystals,
water to sound, fire to form, life flickers
uncounted into the supple arms of love

The space of these walls is the body's living space,
tear open your ribs and breathe the color of time
where nothing leads away, the world comes forward
in flaming sequences Pillars and prisms Riders
and horses and the figures of consciousness,
red cow grows long, goes running through the world
Flung into movement in carnal purity,
these bodies are sealed—warm lip and crystal hand
in a jungle of light Colour-sheeted, seductive
foreboding eyelid lowered on the long eye,
fluid and vulnerable The spaces of the body
are suddenly limitless, and riding flesh
shapes constellations over the golden breast,
confusion of scents and illuminated touch—
, monster touch, the throat printed with brightness,
wide outlined gesture where the bodies ride
Bells, and the spirit flashing The religious bells,
bronze under the sunlight like breasts ringing,
bronze in the closed air, the memory of walls,
great sensual shoulders in the web of time

III LES TENDRESSES BESTIALES

A procession of caresses alters the ancient sky
until new constellations are the body shining
There's the Hand to steer by, there the horizon Breast,
and the Great Stars kindling the fluid hill
All the rooms open into magical boxes,
nothing is tilted, everything flickers
sexual and exquisite
The panther with its throat along my arm
turns black and flows away
Deep in all streets passes a faceless whore
and the checkered men are whispering one word,

The face I know becomes the night-black rose
The sharp face is now an electric fan
and says one word to me
The dice and the alcohol and the destruction
have drunk themselves and cast
Broken bottle of loss, and the glass
turned bloody into the face
Now the scene comes forward, very clear
Dream-singing, airborne, surrenders the recalled,
the gesture arrives riding over the breast,
singing, singing, tender atrocity,
the silver derelict wearing fur and claws
Oh love, I stood under the apple branch,
I saw the whipped bay and the small dark islands,
and night sailing the river and the foghorn's word
My life said to you I want to love you well
The wheel goes back and I shall live again,
but the wave turns, my birth arrives and spills
over my breast the world bearing my grave,
and your eyes open in earth You touched my life
My life reaches the skin, moves under your smile,
and your shoulders and your throat and your face and
your thighs flash

I am haunted by interrupted acts,
introspective as a leper, enchanted
by a repulsive clew
a gross and fugitive movement of the limbs
Is this the love that shook the lights to flame?
Sheeted avenues thrash in the wind,
torn streets, the savage parks
I am plunged, deep Must find the midnight cave

IV BLACK BLOOD

A habit leading to murder, smoky laughter
hated at first, but necessary later
Alteration of motives To stamp in terror
around the deserted harbor, down the hill
until the woman laced into a harp
screams and screams and the great clock strikes,
swinging its giant figures past the face
The Floating Man rides on the ragged sunset
asking and asking Do not say, Which loved ?
Which was beloved ? Only, Who most enjoyed ?
Armored ghost of rage, screaming and powerless
Only find me and touch my blood again
Find me A girl runs down the street
singing Take me, yelling Take me Take,
Hang me from the clapper of a bell
and you as hangman ring it sweet tonight,
for nothing clean in me is more than cloud
unless you call it —As I ran I heard
a black voice beating among all that blood
"Try to live as if there were a God "

V THE BROKEN WORLD

Came to Ajanta cave, the painted space of the breast,
the real world where everything is complete,
there are no shadows, the forms of incompleteness
The great cloak blows in the light, rider and horse arrive,
the shoulders turn and every gift is made
No shadows fall There is no source of distortion
In our world, a tree casts the shadow of a woman,
a man the shadow of a phallus, a hand raised
the shadow of the whip

Here everything is itself,
here all may stand on summer earth
Brightness has overtaken every light,
and every myth netted itself in flesh
New origins, and peace given entire
and the spirit alive
In the shadowless cave
the naked arm is raised
Animals arrive,
interlaced, and gods
interlaced, and men
flame-woven
I stand and am complete

Crawls from the door,
black at my two feet
the shadow of the world
World, not yet one,
enters the heart again
The naked world, and the old noise of tears,
the fear, the expiation and the love,
a world of the shadowed and alone
The journey, and the struggles of the moon

MURIEL RUKEYSER

COUNTRY MIRACLE

As I came over the rise by Stewart's ash
In the evening early, and caught sight of home,
I stopped two fields off, seeing what I saw

The Hustons and the Cosmos in such bright
Concatenation as had never been,
Ten odds to one, since first there was a Huston

In the empty sky above the open hill
A cockle-shell of cloud the length of the roof
(No other in the whole sky anywhere)
Hung low above the old bright lamp-lit house
That rayed out yellow light from every window
It was the kind of cloud angels would crowd on
In an old painting—Giotto knew the kind—
More raft than cloud, it barely cleared the chimney,
Cusped with a crescent moon, pranked with a planet

Incredible juxtaposition, stylized, fleeting!
I never saw so pointed a fable, so narrowed
A doing of nature's, as that night I saw
(So pointed a fable, with so hid a meaning)
Forefathers' roof, cloud, moon, and Jupiter
Whirled in together for a moment of time
In the enormous scheme, to whirl apart forever

—Why single out the Hustons, why stoop down
Thus to their hill-head, take their roof for a measure?
If chance had done this thing, then chance was greater
Than I had any idea of, more to be feared
Not that it happened on the billionth cast,
But that I saw it, made the miracle,
Whether a hall-mark of authentication
(And seals are made of elements as simple,
Earning significance from neighborhood),
Or a wild throw of the dice that turned up doubles
Before my startled eyes, one thing was certain
No Woodward, Jones or Baker could have seen,
What I saw plain It was a sight for Hustons

Pulled in by taut wires—man, moon, cloud, and planet
(Man the last comer by the tick of a heart-beat)—
We met, blind allies punctual to the minute,
As I came over the rise by Stewart's ash

ABBIE HUSTON EVANS

LET NO CHARITABLE HOPE

Now let no charitable hope
Confuse my mind with images
Of eagle and of antelope
I am in nature none of these

I was, being human, born alone,
I am, being woman, hard beset,
I live by squeezing from a stone
The little nourishment I get

It masks outrageous and austere
The years go by in single file,
But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile

ELINOR WYLIE

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

AVOID the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate,
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate

When flocks are folded warm
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole,
Go burrow underground

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source
And disembodied bones

ELINOR WYLIE

ADDRESS TO MY SOUL

My soul, be not disturbed
By planetary war,
Remain securely orb'd
In this contracted star

Fear not, pathetic flame,
Your sustenance is doubt
Glassed in translucent dream
They cannot snuff you out

Wear water, or a mask
Of unapparent cloud,
Be brave and never ask
A more defunctive shroud

The universal points
Are shrunk into a flower,
Between its delicate joints
Chaos keeps no power

The pure integral form,
Austere and silver-dark,
Is balanced on the storm
In its predestined arc

Small as a sphere of rain
It slides along the groove
Whose path is furrowed plain
Among the suns that move

The shapes of April buds
Outlive the phantom year
Upon the void at odds
The dewdrop falls severe

Five-petalled flame, be cold
Be firm, dissolving star,
Accept the stricter mould
That makes you singular

ELINOR WYLIE

TIME IS THE FIRE

CALMLY we walk through this April's day,
Metropolitan poetry here and there,
In the park sit pauper and *rentier*,
The screaming children, the motor car
Fugitive about us, running away,
Between the worker and the millionaire
Number provides all distances,
It is Nineteen Thirty-Seven now,
Many great dears are taken away,
What will become of you and me
(This is the school in which we learn)
Besides the photo and the memory?
(that time is the fire in which we burn)

(This is the school in which we learn)
What is the self amid this blaze?
What am I now that I was then
Which I shall suffer and act again,
The theodicy I wrote in my high school days
Restored all life from infancy,
The children shouting are bright as they run
(This is the school in which they learn)
Ravished entirely in their passing play!
(that time is the fire in which they burn)

Avid its rush, that reeling blaze!
Where is my father and Eleanor?
Not where are they now, dead seven years,
But what they were then?

No more? Nor more?
From Nineteen-Fourteen to the present day,
Bert Spira and Rhoda consume, consume
Not where they are now (where are they now?)

But what they were then, both beautiful,
Each minute bursts in the burning room,
The great globe reels in the solar fire,
Spinning the trivial and unique away
(How all things flash! How all things flare!)
What am I now that I was then?
May memory restore again and again
The smallest color of the smallest day
Time is the school in which we learn,
Time is the fire in which we burn

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT

I HAVE been one acquainted with the night
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain
I have outwalked the furthest city light

I have looked down the saddest city lane
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye,
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right
I have been one acquainted with the night

ROBERT FROST

BEARDED OAKS

THE oaks, how subtle and marine,
Bearded, and all the layered light
Above them swims, and thus the scene,
Recessed, awaits the positive night

So, waiting, we in the grass now lie
Beneath the languorous tread of light
The grasses, kelp-like, satisfy
The nameless motions of the air

Upon the floor of light, and time,
Unmurmuring, of polyp made,
We rest, we are, as light withdraws,
Twin atolls on a shelf of shade

Ages to our construction went,
Dim architecture, hour by hour
And violence, forgot now, lent
The present stillness all its power

The storm of noon above us rolled,
Of light the fury, furious gold,
The long drag troubling us, the depth
Dark is unrocking, unrippling, still

Passion and slaughter, ruth, decay
Descend, minutely whispering down,
Silted through swaying streams, to lay
Foundation for our voicelessness

All our debate is voiceless here,
As all our rage, the rage of stone,

If hope is hopeless, then fearless fear,
And history is thus undone

Our feet once wrought the hollow street
With echo when the lamps were dead
At windows, once our headlight glare
Disturbed the doe that, leaping, fled

I do not love you less that now
The caged heart makes iron stroke,
Or less that all that light once gave
The graduate dark should now revoke

We live in time so little time
And we learn all so painfully,
That we may spare this hour's term
To practice for eternity

ROBERT PENN WARREN

LEISURE

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare,

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare

W H DAVIES

THE IDLE LIFE I LEAD

THE idle life I lead
Is like a pleasant sleep,
Wherein I rest and heed
The dreams that by me sweep

And still of all my dreams
In turn so swiftly past,
Each in its fancy seems
A nobler than the last

And every eve I say,
Noting my step in bliss,
That I have known no day
In all my life like this

ROBERT BRIDGES

A MAN WHO HAD FALLEN AMONG THIEVES

a man who had fallen among thieves
lay by the roadside on his back
dressed in fifteenthrate ideas
wearing a round jeer for a hat

fate per a somewhat more than less
emancipated evening
had in return for consciousness
endowed him with a changeless grin

whereon a dozen staunch and leal
citizens did graze at pause
then fired by hypercivic zeal
sought newer pastures or because

swaddled with a frozen brook
of pinkest vomit out of eyes
which noticed nobody he looked
as if he did not care to rise

one hand did nothing on the vest
its wideflung friend clenched weakly dirt
while the mute trouserfly confessed
a button solemnly mert

Brushing from whom the stiffened puke
1 put him all into my arms
and staggered banged with terror through
a million billion trillion stars

E E CUMMINGS

I DID NOT LOSE MY HEART

I DID not lose my heart in summer's even,
When roses to the moonrise burst apart
When plumes were under heel and lead was flying,
In blood and smoke and flame I lost my heart

I lost it to a soldier and a foeman,
A chap that did not kill me, but he tried,
That took the sabre straight and took it striking,
And laughed and kissed his hand to me and died

A E HOUSMAN

THE TOMB OF LIEUTENANT JOHN LEARMONTH, AIF

*At the end on Crete he took to
the hills, and said he'd fight it out
with only a revolver He was a great
soldier — One of his men in a letter*

THIS is not sorrow, this is work I build
A cairn of words over a silent man,
My friend John Learmonth whom the Germans killed

There was no word of hero in his plan,
Verse should have been his love and peace his trade,
But history turned him to a partisan

Far from the battle as his bones are laid
Crete will remember him Remember well,
Mountains of Crete, the Second Field Brigade!

Say Crete, and there is little more to tell
Of muddle tall as treachery, despair
And black defeat resounding like a bell,

But bring the magnifying focus near
And in contempt of muddle and defeat
The old heroic virtues still appear

Australian blood where hot and icy meet
(James Hogg and Lermontov were of his kin)
Lie still and fertilize the fields of Crete

Schoolboy, I watched his ballading begin—
Billy and bullocky and billabong,
Our properties of childhood, all were in

I heard the air though not the undersong,
The fierceness and resolve, but all the same
They're the tradition, and tradition's strong

Swagman and bushranger die hard, die game,
Die fighting, like that wild colonial boy—
Jack Dowling, says the ballad, was his name

And so he spun his pistol like a toy,
Turned to the hills like wolf or kangaroo
And faced destruction with a bitter joy

His freedom gave him nothing else to do
But set his back against his family tree
And fight the better for the fact he knew

He was as good as dead Because the sea
Was closed and the air dark and the land lost,
"They'll never capture me alive," said he

That's courage chemically pure, uncrossed
With sacrifice or duty or career,
Which counts and pays in ready coin the cost

Of holding course Armies are not its sphere
Where all's contrived to achieve its counterfeit,
It swears with discipline, it's volunteer

I could as hardly make a moral fit
Around it as around a lightning-flash
There is no moral, that's the point of it,

No moral But I'm glad of this panache
That sparkles, as from flint, from us and steel,
True to no crown nor presidential sash

Nor flag nor fame Let others mourn and feel
He died for nothing nothings have their place
While thus the kind and civilized conceal

This spring of unsuspected inward grace
And look on death as equals, I am filled
With queer affection for the human race

JOHN MANIFOLD

AFTER THEY HAVE TIRED

AFTER they have tired of the brilliance of cities
And of striving for office where at last they may languish
Hung round with easy chains until
Death and Jerusalem glorify also the crossing-sweeper
Then those streets the rich built and their easy love
Fade like old cloths, and it is death stalks through life
Grinning white through all faces
Clean and equal like the shine from snow •

In this time when grief pours freezing over us,
When the hard light of pain gleams at every street corner,
When those who were pillars of that day's gold roof
Shrink in their clothes, surely from hunger
We may strike fire, like fire from flint?
And our strength is now the strength of our bones
Clean and equal like the shine from snow
And the strength of famine and of our enforced idleness,
And it is the strength of our love for each other

Readers of this strange language,
We have come at last to a country
Where light equal, like the shine from snow, strikes all
faces,
Here you may wonder
How it was that works, money, interest, building, could
ever hide
The palpable and obvious love of man for man

Oh comrades, let not those who follow after
—The beautiful generation that shall spring from our
sides—
Let not them wonder how after the failure of banks

failure of cathedrals and the declared insanity of our
rulers,
lacked the Spring-like resources of the tiger
of plants who strike out new roots to gushing waters
through torn-down portions of old fabric let their
eyes
atch the admiring dawn explode like a shell
round us, dazing us with its light like snow

STEPHEN SPENDER

MENDING WALL

SOMETHING there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast
The work of hunters is another thing
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill,
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again

I THINK CONTINUALLY OF THOSE WHO WERE TRULY GREAT

I THINK continually of those who were truly great
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
Through corridors of light where the hours are suns,
Endless and singing Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the spirit clothed from head to foot in
song

And who hoarded from the spring branches
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms

What is precious is never to forget
The delight of the blood drawn from ageless springs
Breaking through rocks in worlds before our earth,
Never to deny its pleasure in the simple morning light,
Nor its grave evening demand for love,
Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields
See how these names are fêted by the wavering grass,
And by the streamers of white cloud,
And whispers of wind in the listening sky,
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the
sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor

STEPHEN SPENDER

FOR THE ONE WHO WOULD TAKE MAN'S LIFE IN HIS HANDS

TIGER CHRIST unsheathed his sword,
Threw it down, became a lamb
Swift spat upon the species, but
Took two women to his heart
Samson who was strong as death
Paid his strength to kiss a slut
Othello that stiff warrior
Was broken by a woman's heart
Troy burned for a sea-tax, also for
Possession of a charming whore
What do all examples show?
What must the finished murderer know?

You cannot sit on bayonets,
Nor can you eat among the dead
When all are killed, you are alone,
A vacuum comes where hate has fed
Murder's fruit is silent stone,
The gun increases poverty
With what do these examples shine?
The soldier turned to girls and wine
Love is the tact of every good,
The only warmth, the only peace

"What have I said?" asked Socrates,
"Affirmed extremes, cried yes and no,
Taken all parts, denied myself,
Praised the caress, extolled the blow,
Soldier and lover quite deranged
Until their motions are exchanged

—What do all examples show?
What can any actor know?
The contradiction in every act,
The infinite task of the human heart ”

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE HEART

WHO must be blamed for the young head
On the pavement in the shape of blood,
But the whole heart of man?

The giant cloud shines on all,
The innocent table holds up the just
And evil document

Who must be blamed? The young head
And the vile aimer's hand,
And the whole heart they share,

The wide landscape, which holds houses,
Slaughter houses, the worm, adder
And the berry, caves,

Open and secret waters, museums
With the fossils of love and stuffed
Birds of law, all

Plants, nettles to fumitory, choked
Ditch, and all beyond footstep
To the coloured edge

Who must you blame? The young head
And the vile aimer's hand
And the whole heart of man

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

(1941)

MY OWN HEART LET ME MORE HAVE PITY ON

My own heart let me more have pity on, let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable, not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet

I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet

Soul, self, come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be, call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere, leave comfort root-room, let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what, whose smile
's not wrung, see you, unforeseen times rather—as skies
Betweenpie mountains—lights a lovely mile

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

COULD MAN BE DRUNK FOR EVER

COULD man be drunk for ever
With liquor, love, or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights

But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts,
And if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts

A E HOUSMAN

PARTING

My life closed twice before its close,
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell

EMILY DICKINSON

MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS

ABOUT suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters how well they understood
Its human position, how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just
walking dully along,
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the
torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree

In Brueghel's *Icarus*, for instance how everything turns
away
Quite leisurely from the disaster, the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure, the sun
shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have
seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on

W H AUDEN

THIS LAST PAIN

THIS last pain for the damned the Fathers found
"They knew the bliss with which they were not crowned"
Such, but on earth, let me foretell,
Is all, of heaven or of hell

Man, as the prying housemaid of the soul,
May know her happiness by eye to hole
He's safe, the key is lost, he knows
Door will not open, nor hole close

"What is conceivable can happen too,"
Said Wittgenstein, who had not dreamed of you,
But wisely, if we worked it long
We should forget where it was wrong

Those thorns are crowns which, woven into knots,
Crackle under and soon boil fools' pots;
And no man's watching, wise and long
Would ever stare them into song

Thorns burn to a consistent ash, like man,
A splendid cleanser for the frying-pan
And those who leap from pan to fire
Should this brave opposite admire

All those large dreams by which men long live well
Are magic-lanterned on the smoke of hell,
This then is real, I have implied,
A painted, small, transparent slide

These the inventive can hand-paint at leisure,
Or most emporia would stock our measure,

And feasting in their dappled shade
We should forget how they were made

Feign then what's by a decent tact believed
And act that state is only so conceived
And build an edifice of form
For house where phantoms may keep warm

Imagine, then, by miracle, with me,
(Ambiguous gifts, as what gods give must be)
What could not possibly be there,
And learn a style from a despair

WILLIAM EMPSON

SESTINA ALTAFORTE

LOQUITUR (*En* Bertrams de Born)

Dante Alighieri, put this man in hell for that he was a stirrer up of strife
Eccovi!

Judge ye!

Have I dug him up again?

The scene is at his castle, Altaforte 'Papiols' is his jongleur, "The
Leopard" the *device* of Richard Coeur de Lion)

DAMN it all! all this our South stinks peace
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
I have no life save when the swords clash
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple,
opposing
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing

In hot summer have I great rejoicing
When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
And the fierce thunders roar me their music

And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
And through all the riven skies God's swords clash

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing,
Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
Bah! there's no wine like the blood's crimson!

And I love to see the sun rise blood-crimson
And I watch his spears through the dark clash
And it fills all my heart with rejoicing
And pries wide my mouth with fast music
When I see him so scorn and defy peace,
His lone might 'gainst all darkness opposing

The man who fears war and squats opposing
My words for stour, hath no blood of crimson
But is fit only to rot in womanish peace
Far from where worth's won and the swords clash
For the death of such sluts I go rejoicing,
Yea, I fill all the air with my music

Papiols, Papiols, to the music!
There's no sound like to swords swords opposing,
No cry like the battle's rejoicing
When our elbows and swords drip the crimson
And our charges 'gainst "The Leopard's" rush clash
May God damn for ever all who cry "Peace!"

And let the music of the swords make them crimson!
Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
Hell blot black for always the thought "Peace!"

EZRA POUND

THE BLOODY SIRE

It is not bad Let them play
Let the guns bark and the bombing-plane
Speak his prodigious blasphemies
It is not bad, it is high time,
Stark violence is still the sire of all the world's values

What but the wolf's tooth chiseled so fine
The fleet limbs of the antelope?
What but fear winged the birds and hunger
Gemmed with such eyes the great goshawk's head?
Violence has been the sire of all the world's values

Who would remember Helen's face
Lacking the terrible halo of spears?
Who formed Christ but Herod and Caesar,
The cruel and bloody victories of Caesar?
Violence has been the sire of all the world's values

Never weep, let them play,
Old violence is not too old to beget new values

ROBINSON JEFFERS

DYING

I HEARD a fly buzz when I died,
The stillness round my form
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heavens of storm

The eyes beside had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering sure
For that last onset, when the king
Be witnessed in his power

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me I
Could make assignable—and then
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me,
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see

EMILY DICKINSON

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

WHOSE woods these are I think I know
His house is in the village though,
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake

The woods are lovely, dark and deep
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep

ROBERT FROST

SINCE I HAVE FELT THE SENSE OF DEATH

SINCE I have felt the sense of death,
Since I have borne its dread, its fear—
Oh, how my life has grown more dear
Since I have felt the sense of death!
Sorrows are good, and cares are small,
Since I have known the loss of all

Since I have felt the sense of death,
And death forever at my side—
Oh, how the world has opened wide
Since I have felt the sense of death!
My hours are jewels that I spend,
For I have seen the hours end

Since I have felt the sense of death,
Since I have looked on that black night—
My inmost brain is fierce with light
Since I have felt the sense of death
O dark, that made my eyes to see!
O death, that gave my life to me

HELEN HOYT

I DIED FOR BEAUTY

I DIED for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room

He questioned softly why I failed ?
"For beauty," I replied
"And I for truth—the two are one
We brethren are," he said

And so, as kinsmen met a-night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips,
And covered up our names

EMILY DICKINSON

DEATH

I SHALL walk down the road
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of Death, like scented rain
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me
Then he will graze me with his hands
And I shall be one of the sleeping silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

IN THE MOHAVE

As I rode down the arroyo through yuccas belled with
bloom,

I saw a last year's stalk lift dried hands to the light,
Like age at prayer for death within a careless room,
Like one by day o'ertaken, whose sick desire is night

And as I rode I saw a lean coyote lying

All perfect as in life upon a silver dune,
Save that his feet no more could flee the harsh light's
spying,

Save that no more his shadow would cleave the sinking
moon

O cruel land, where form endures, the spirit fled!

You chill the sun for me with your gray sphinx's smile,
Brooding in the bright silence above your captive dead,
Where beat the heart of life so brief, so brief a while!

PATRICK ORR

THE NIGHT IS FREEZING FAST

THE night is freezing fast,
To-morrow comes December,
And winterfalls of old
Are with me from the past,
And chiefly I remember
How Dick would hate the cold

Fall, winter, fall, for he,
Prompt hand and headpiece clever,

Has woven a winter robe,
And made of earth and sea
His overcoat for ever,
And wears the turning globe

A E HOUSMAN

THE GROUNDHOG

IN June, amid the golden fields,
I saw a groundhog lying dead
Dead lay he, my senses shook,
And mind outshot our naked frailty
There lowly in the vigorous summer
His form began its senseless change,
And made my senses waver dim
Seeing nature ferocious in him
Inspecting close his maggots' might
And seething cauldron of his being,
Half with loathing, half with a strange love,
I poked him with an angry stick
The fever arose, became a flame
And Vigour circumscribed the skies,
Immense energy in the sun,
And through my frame a sunless trembling
My stick had done nor good nor harm
Then stood I silent in the day
Watching the object, as before,
And kept my reverence for knowledge
Trying for control, to be still,
To quell the passion of the blood,
Until I had bent down on my knees
Praying for joy in the sight of decay

And so I left, and I returned
In Autumn strict of eye, to see
The sap gone out of the groundhog,
But the bony sodden hulk remained
But the year had lost its meaning,
And in intellectual chains
I lost both love and loathing,
Mured up in the wall of wisdom
Another summer took the fields again
Massive and burning, full of life,
But when I chanced upon the spot
There was only a little hair left,
And bones bleaching in the sunlight
Beautiful as architecture,
I watched them like a geometer,
And cut a walking stick from a birch
It has been three years, now
There is no sign of the groundhog
I stood there in the whirling summer,
My hand capped a withered heart,
And thought of China and of Greece,
Of Alexander in his tent;
Of Montaigne in his tower,
Of Saint Theresa in her wild lament

RICHARD EBERHART

FOR A DEAD LADY

No more with overflowing light
Shall fill the eyes that now are faded
Nor shall another's fringe with night
Their woman-hidden world as they did

No more shall quiver down the days
The flowing wonder of her ways,
Whereof no language may requite
The shifting and the many-shaded

The grace, divine, definitive,
Clings only as a faint forestalling,
The laugh that love could not forgive
Is hushed, and answers to no calling,
The forehead and the little ears
Have gone where Saturn keeps the years,
The breast where roses could not live
Has done with rising and with falling

The beauty, shattered by the laws
That have creation in their keeping,
No longer trembles at applause,
Or over children that are sleeping,
And we who delve in beauty's lore
Know all that we have known before
Of what inexorable cause
Makes Time so vicious in his reaping

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

THE TRAVELLER

THE afternoon with heavy hours
Lies vacant on the wanderer's sight
And sunset waits whose cloudy towers
Expect the legions of the night

Till sullen thunder from the cave
Of twilight with deliberate swell
Whispers the air his darkening slave
To loose the nether bolts of hell

To crush the battlements of cloud
The wall of light around the West
So that the swarming dark will crowd
The traveller upon his quest

And all the air with heavy hours
Sinks on the wanderer's dull sight
And the thick dark whose hidden towers
Menace his travel to the night

Rolls forward, backward hill to hill
Until the seeker knows not where
Beyond the shade of Peacher's Mill,
In the burnt meadow, with colorless hair

The secret ones around a stone
Their lips withdrawn in meet surprise
Lie still, being naught but bone
With naught but space within their eyes

Until bewildered by the road
And half-forgetful of his quest
The wanderer with such a load
Of breathing, being too late a guest

Turns back, so near the secret stone,
Falls down breathless at last and blind
And the dark shift within the bone
Brings him the end he could not find

ALLEN TATE

THE HILL

WHERE are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the
 boozier, the fighter?
All, all are sleeping on the hill

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud,
 the happy one?—
All, all are sleeping on the hill

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for her heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and
 Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution—
All, all are sleeping on the hill

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

THE SOUL LONGS TO RETURN WHENCE IT CAME

I DROVE up to the graveyard, which
Used to frighten me as a boy,
When I walked down the river past it,
And evening was coming on I'd make sure
I came home from the woods early enough
I drove in, I found to the place, I
Left the motor running My eyes hurried,
To recognize the great oak tree
On the little slope, among the stones
It was a high day, a crisp day,
The cleanest kind of Autumn day,
With brisk intoxicating air, a
Little wind that frisked, yet there was

Old age in the atmosphere, nostalgia,
The subtle heaviness of the Fall
I stilled the motor I walked a few paces,
It was good, the tree, the friendliness of it
I touched it, I thought of the roots,
They would have pierced her seven years
O all peoples! O mighty shadows!
My eyes opened along the avenue
Of tombstones, the common land of death
Humiliation of all loves lost,
That might have had full meaning in any
Plot of ground, come, hear the silence,
See the quivering light My mind worked
Almost imperceptibly, I
In the command, I the wilful ponderer
I must have stood silent and thoughtful
There A host of dry leaves
Danced on the ground in the wind
They startled, they curved up from the ground,
There was a dry rustling, rattling
The sun was motionless and brittle
I felt the blood darken in my cheeks
And burn Like running My eyes
Telescoped on decay, I out of command
Fear, tenderness, they seized me
My eyes were hot, I dared not look
At the leaves A pagan urge swept me
Multitudes, O multitudes in one
The urge of the earth, the titan
Wild and primitive lust, fused
On the ground of her grave
I was a being of feeling alone
I flung myself down on the earth
Full length on the great earth, full length,
I wept out the dark load of human love

In pagan adoration I adored her
I felt the actual earth of her
Victor and victim of humility,
I closed in the wordless ecstasy
Of mystery where there is no thought
But feeling lost in itself forever,
Profound, remote, immediate, and calm
Frightened, I stood up, I looked about
Suspiciously, hurriedly (a rustling),
As if the sun, the air, the trees
Were human, might not understand
I drew breath, it made a sound,
I stepped gingerly away Then
The mind came like a fire, it
Tortured man, I thought of madness
The mind will not accept the blood
The sun and sky, the trees and grasses,
And the whispering leaves, took on
Their usual characters I went away,
Slowly, tingling, elated, saying, saying
Mother, Great Being, O Source of Life
To whom in wisdom we return,
Accept this humble servant evermore

RICHARD EBERHART

AN EPITAPH

HERE lies a most beautiful lady
Light of step and heart was she,
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country

But beauty vanishes, beauty passes,
However rare—rare it be,
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

WALTER DE LA MARE

HERE LIES A LADY

HERE lies a lady of beauty and high degree
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would
blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making? Why, nothing, she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds—

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white
and blown,
And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine
The sixth of these states was her last, the cold settled
down

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye
may thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,
In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

THE HILL WIFE

The Impulse

It was too lonely for her there,
And too wild,
And since there were but two of them,
And no child,

And work was little in the house,
She was free,
And followed where he furrowed field,
Or felled tree

She rested on a log and tossed
The fresh chips,
With a song only to herself
On her lips

And once she went to break a bough
Of black alder
She strayed so far she scarcely heard
When he called her—

And didn't answer—didn't speak—
Or return
She stood, and then she ran and hid
In the fern

He never found her, though he looked
Everywhere,
And he asked at her mother's house
Was she there

Sudden and swift and light as that
The ties gave,
And he learned of finalities
Besides the grave

ROBERT FROST

SILENCE

THERE is a mystery too deep for words,
The silence of the dead comes nearer to it,
Being wisest in the end What word shall hold
The sorrow sitting at the heart of things,
The majesty and patience of the truth!
Silence will serve, it is an older tongue
The empty room, the moonlight on the wall,
Speak for the unreturning traveller

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

RAIN AT NIGHT

ARE you awake? Do you hear the rain?
How rushingly it strikes upon the ground,
And on the roof, and the wet window-pane!
Sometimes I think it is a comfortable sound,
Making us feel how safe and snug we are
Closing us off in this dark, away from the dark outside
The rest of the world seems dim tonight, mysterious and
far

Oh, there is no world left! Only darkness, darkness
stretching wide
And full of the blind rain's immeasurable fall!

How nothing must we seem unto this ancient thing!
How nothing unto the earth—and we so small!
Oh, wake, wake!—do you not feel my hands cling?
One day it will be raining as it rains tonight, the same
wind blow—
Raining and blowing on this house wherein we lie. but
you and I—
We shall not hear, we shall not ever know
O love, I had forgot that we must die

HELEN HOYT

SPENT WAVE

YOUR loveliness was like a wave,
The sudden stroke of her delight
Flooded my heart's adoring cave,
The shock of the beloved might
Startled the gloom to starry light—
That gave it back, and drank, and gave

But broken, broken, is her strength,
That vehement glory, loved before—
The sweet rage of her radiant length,
Shattered and shed forevermore
The adorable ardor, the dear might,
Hurled itself deathward with delight,
And sank upon the sounding shore

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

TELL ME NOT HERE, IT NEEDS NOT SAYING

TELL me not here, it needs not saying,
What tune the enchantress plays
In aftermaths of soft September
Or under blanching mays,
For she and I were long acquainted
And I knew all her ways

On russet floors, by waters idle,
The pine lets fall its cone,
The cuckoo shouts all day at nothing
In leafy dells alone,
And traveller's joy beguiles in autumn
Hearts that have lost their own

On acres of the seeded grasses
The changing burnish heaves,
Or marshalled under moons of harvest
Stand still all night the sheaves,
Or beeches strip in storms for winter
And stain the wind with leaves

Possess, as I possessed a season,
The countries I resign,
Where over elmy plains the highway
Would mount the hills and shine,
And full of shade the pillared forest
Would murmur and be mine

For nature, heartless, witless nature,
Will neither care nor know

What stranger's feet may find the meadow
And trespass there and go,
Nor ask amid the dews of morning
If they are mine or no

A E HOUSMAN

WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN

WITH rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid,
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade

A E HOUSMAN

LIVING

SLOW bleak awakening from the morning dream
Brings me in contact with the sudden day
I am alive—thus I
I let my fingers move along my body
Realisation warns them, and my nerves
Prepare their rapid messages and signals
While Memory begins recording, coding,

Repeating, all the time Imagination
Mutters You'll only die

Here's a new day O Pendulum move slowly!
My usual clothes are waiting on their peg
I am alive—this I
And in a moment Habit, like a crane,
Will bow its neck and dip its pulleyed cable,
Gathering me, my body, and our garment,
And swing me forth, oblivious of my question,
Into the daylight—why?

I think of all the others who awaken,
And wonder if they go to meet the morning
More valiantly than I,
Nor asking of this Day they will be living
What have I done that I should be alive?
O, can I not forget that I am living?
How shall I reconcile the two conditions
Living, and yet—to die?

Between the curtains the autumnal sunlight
With lean and yellow finger points me out,
The clock moans Why? Why? Why?
But suddenly, as if without a reason,
Heart, Brain and Body, and Imagination
All gather in tumultuous joy together,
Running like children down the path of morning
To fields where they can play without a quarrel
A country I'd forgotten, but remember,
And welcome with a cry

O cool glad pasture, living tree, tall corn,
Great cliff, or languid sloping sand, cold sea,
Waves, rivers curving you, eternal flowers,

Give me content, while I can think of you
Give me your living breath!
Back to your rampart, Death

HAROLD MONRO

THIS AMBER SUNSTREAM

THIS amber sunstream, with an hour to live,
Flows carelessly, and does not save itself,
Nor recognizes any entered room—
This room, nor hears the clock upon a shelf,
Declaring the lone hour, for where it goes
All space in a great silence ever flows

No living man may know it till this hour,
When the clear sunstream, thickening to amber,
Moves like a sea, and the sunk hulls of houses
Let it come slowly through, as divers clamber,
Feeling for gold So now into this room
Peer the large eyes, unopen to their doom

Another hour and nothing will be here
Even upon themselves the eyes will close
Nor will this bulk, withdrawing, die outdoors
In night, that from another silence flows
No living man in any western room
But sits at amber sunset round a tomb

MARK VAN DOREN

HYMN TO EARTH

FAREWELL, incomparable element,
Whence man arose, where he shall not return,
And hail, imperfect urn
Of his last ashes, and his firstborn fruit,
Farewell, the long pursuit,
And all the adventures of his discontent,
The voyages which sent
His heart averse from home
Metal of clay, permit him that he come
To thy slow-burning fire as to a hearth,
Accept him as a particle of earth

Fire, being divided from the other three,
It lives removed, or secret at the core,
Most subtle of the four,
When air flies not, nor water flows,
It disembodied goes,
Being light, elixir of the first decree,
More volatile than he,
With strength and power to pass
Through space, where never his least atom was
He has no part in it, save as his eyes
Have drawn its emanation from the skies

A wingless creature heavier than air,
He is rejected of its quintessence,
Coming and going hence,
In the twin minutes of his birth and death,
He may inhale as breath,
As breath relinquish heaven's atmosphere,
Yet in it have no share,
Nor can survive therein

Where its outer edge is filtered pure and thin
It doth but lend its crystal to his lungs
For his early crying, and his final songs

The element of water has denied
Its child, it is no more his element,
It never will relent,
Its silver harvests are more sparsely given
Than the rewards of heaven,
And he shall drink cold comfort at its side
The water is too wide
The seamew and the gull
Feather a nest made soft and pitiful
Upon its foam, he has not any part
In the long swell of sorrow at its heart

Hail and farewell, beloved element,
Whence he departed, and his parent once,
See where thy spirit runs
Which for so long hath had the moon to wife,
Shall this support his life
Until the arches of the waves be bent
And grow shallow and spent?
Wisely it cast him forth
With his dead weight of burdens nothing worth,
Leaving him, for the universal years,
A little seawater to make his tears

Hail, element of earth, receive thy own,
And cherish, at thy charitable breast,
This man, this mongrel beast
He ploughs the sand, and, at his hardest need,
He sows himself for seed,
He ploughs the furrow, and in this lies down
Before the corn is grown,

Between the apple bloom
And the ripe apple is sufficient room
In time, and the matter, to consume his love
And make him parcel of a cypress grove

Receive him as thy lover for an hour
Who will not weary, by a longer stay,
The kind embrace of clay,
Even within thine arms he is dispersed
To nothing, as at first,
The air flings downward from its four-
 quartered tower
Him whom the flames devour,
At the full tide, at the flood,
The sea is mingled with his salty blood
The traveller dust, although the dust be vile,
Sleeps as thy lover for a little while

ELINOR WYLIE

BIRCHES

WHEN I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-coloured
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snowcrust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,

And they seem not to break, though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground
So was I once myself a swinger of birches
And so I dream of going back to be
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed it open,
I'd like to get away from earth a while

And then come back to it and begin over
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return Earth's the right place for love
I don't know where it's likely to go better
I'd like to go by climbing a high birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again
That would be good both going and coming back
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches

ROBERT FROST

THIS DIM AND PTOLEMAIC MAN

FOR forty years, for forty-one,
Sparing the profits of the sun,
This farmer piled his meagre hoard
To buy at last a rattly Ford

Now crouched on a scared smile he feels
Motion spurt beneath his heels,
Rheumatically intent shifts gears,
Unloosing joints of rustic years

Morning light obscures the stars,
He swerves, avoiding other cars,
Wheels with the road, does not discern
He eastward goes at every turn,

Nor how his aged limbs are hurled
Through all the motions of the world,
How wild past farms, past ricks, past trees,
He perishes toward Hercules

JOHN PEALE BISHOP

THE WASTE LAND

*'NAM Sibyllam quidem Cumus ego ipse oculis
meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri
dicerent Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις, respondebat illa
ἀποθανεῖν θέλω'*

For Ezra Pound
il miglior fabbro

I THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain, we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight And down we went
In the mountains, there you feel free
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you,
I will show you fear in a handful of dust

*Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu,
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago ,
'They called me the hyacinth girl '
—Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth
garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence
Oed' und leer das Meer

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards Here, said she,
Is your card, the drowned Phœnician Sailor,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes Look!)
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
The lady of situations
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion,
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours, stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced, yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls, staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed
Footsteps shuffled on the stair
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still

'My nerves are bad to-night Yes, bad Stay with me
'Speak to me Why do you never speak Speak
'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
'I never know what you are thinking Think'

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones

'What is that noise?

The wind under the door

'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'

Nothing again nothing

'Do

'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you
remember

'Nothing?'

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes

'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It's so elegant

So intelligent

'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'

'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

'With my hair down, so What shall we do tomorrow?

'What shall we ever do?'

The hot water at ten

And if it rains, a closed car at four

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the
door

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—

I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart

He'll want to know what you done with that money he
gave you

To get yourself some teeth He did, I was there

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said
Oh is there, she said Something o' that, I said
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a
straight look

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said,
Others can pick and choose if you can't
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique
(And her only thirty-one)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young
George)

The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never
been the same

You *are* a proper fool, I said
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot
gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it
hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill Goonight Lou Goonight May Goonight
Ta ta Goonight Goonight
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night,
good night

III THE FIRE SERMON

The river's tent is broken the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard The nymphs are departed

Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights The nymphs are departed

And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors,
Departed, have left no addresses
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs Porter in the spring
O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole'

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc'd
Tereu

Unreal City

Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
Cif London documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine
waits

Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—
I too awaited the expected guest
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire

The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unproved, if undesired
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once,
Exploring hands encounter no defence,
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of indifference
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed,
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead)
Bestows one final patronising kiss,
And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover,
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass
'Well now that's done and I'm glad it's over'
When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone

'This music crept by me upon the waters'
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold

The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide
Red sails
Wide
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar
The barges wash
Drifting logs
Down Greenwich reach
Past the Isle of Dogs
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester
Beating oars
The stern was formed
A gilded shell
Red and gold
The brisk swell
Rippled both shores
Southwest wind
Carried down stream
The peal of bells
White towers
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

'Trams and dusty trees
Highbury bore me Richmond and Kew
Undid me By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe '

'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet After the event

He wept He promised "a new start"
I made no comment What should I resent ?

'On Margate Sands
I can connect
Nothing with nothing
The broken fingernails of dirty hands
My people humble people who expect
Nothing'

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

IV DEATH BY WATER

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss

A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool

Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as
you

V WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses

If there were water

And no rock

If there were rock

And also water

And water

A spring

A pool among the rock

If there were the sound of water only

Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings
And bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted
wells

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one
Only a cock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico
In a flash of lightning Then a damp gust
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavanta
The jungle crouched, humped in silence
Then spoke the thunder

DA

Datta what have we given ?

My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

D₁

Damyata The boat responded
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
Poi s' ascose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you Hieronymo's mad againe
Datta Dayadhvam Damyata

Shantih shantih shantih

T S ELIOT

GERONTION

Thou hast nor youth nor age
But as it were an after dinner sleep
Dreaming of both

HERE I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain
I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought
My house is a decayed house,
And the jew squats on the window-sill, the owner,
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,

Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead,
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter

I an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces

Signs are taken for wonders "We would see a sign!"
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness In the juvescence of the year
Came Christ the tiger
In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering
judas,
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
Among whispers, by Mr Silvero
With caressing hands, at Limoges
Who walked all night in the next room,

By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians,
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
Shifting the candles, Fraulein von Kulp
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door Vacant
shuttles
Weave the wind I have no ghosts,
An old man in a draughty house
Under a windy knob

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions

That the giving famishes the craving Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree

The tiger springs in the new year Us he devours Think
at last

We have not reached conclusion, when I
Stiffen in a rented house Think at last
I have not made this show purposelessly
And it is not by any concitation
Of the backward devils
I would meet you upon this honestly
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition
I have lost my passion why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch
How should I use them for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
With pungent sauces, multiply variety
In a wilderness of mirrors What will the spider do,
Suspend its operations, will the weevil
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs Cammell, whirled
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
In fractured atoms Gull against the wind, in the windy
straits

Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
And an old man driven by the Trades
To a sleepy corner

Tenants of the house,
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season

T S ELIOT

THE WILDERNESS

I

THE red rock wilderness
Shall be my dwelling-place

Where the wind saws at the bluffs
And the pebble falls like thunder
I shall watch the clawed sun
Tear the rocks asunder

The seven-branched cactus
Will never sweat wine
My own bleeding feet
Shall furnish the sign

The rock says "Endure"
The wind says "Pursue"
The sun says "I will suck your bones
And afterwards bury you"

II

Here where the horned skulls mark the limit
Of instinct and intransigent desire

I beat against the rough-tongued wind
Towards the heart of fire

So knowing my youth, which was yesterday,
And my pride which shall be gone to-morrow,
I turn my face to the sun, remembering gardens
Planted by others—Longinus, Guillaume de Lorris
And all love's gardeners, in an early May
O sing, small ancient bird, for I am going
Into the sun's garden, the red rock desert
I have dreamt of and desired more than the lilac's
promise

The flowers of the rock shall never fall

O speak no more of love and death
And speak no word of sorrow
My anger's eaten up my pride
And both shall die to-morrow

Knowing I am no lover, but destroyer,
I am content to face the destroying sun
There shall be no more journeys, nor the anguish
Of meeting and parting, after the last great parting
From the images of dancing and the gardens
Where the brown bird chokes in its song
Until that last great meeting among mountains
Where the metal bird sings madly from the fire

O speak no more of ceremony,
Speak no more of fame
My heart must seek a burning land
To bury its foolish pain

By the dry river at the desert edge
I regret the speaking rivers I have known,

The sunlight shattered under the dark bridge
And many tongues of rivers in the past
Rivers and gardens, singing under the willows,
The glowing moon . .

And all the poets of summer
Must lament another spirit's passing over

O never weep for me, my love,
Or seek me in this land
But light a candle for my luck
And bear it in your hand

III

In this hard garden where the earth's ribs
Lie bare from her first agony, I seek
The home of the gold bird, the predatory Phoenix
O louder than the tongue of any river
Call the red flames among the shapes of rock
And this is my calling

Though my love must sit
Alone with her candle in a darkened room
Listening to music that is not present or
Turning a flower in her childish hands
And though we were a thousand miles apart
This is my calling, to seek the red rock desert
And speak for all those who have lost the gardens,
Forgotten the singing, yet dare not find the desert—
To sing the song that rises from the fire

It is not profitable to remember
How my friends fell, my heroes turned to squalling
Puppets of history, though I would forget
The way of this one's failure, that one's exile—
How the small foreign girl
Grew crazed with her own beauty, how the poet
Talks to the wall in a deserted city,

How others danced until the Tartar wind
Blew in the doors, or sitting alone at midnight
Heard Solomon Eagle beat his drum in the streets
This is the time to ask their pardon
For any act of coldness in the past
There is no kind of space can separate us
No weather, even this cruel sun, can change us,
No dress, though you in shining satin walk
Or you in velvet, while I run in tatters
Against the fiery wind There is no loss,
Only the need to forget This is my calling

But behind me the rattle of stones underfoot,
Stones from the bare ridge rolling and skidding
A voice I know, but had consigned to silence,
Another calling my own words coming back

"And I would follow after you
Though it were a thousand mile
Though you crossed the deserts of the world to the king-
dom of death, my dear,
I would follow after you and stand beside you there"

IV

Who is this lady, flirting with the wind,
Blown like a tangle of dried flowers through the desert?
This is my lover whom I left
Alone at evening between the candles—
White fingers nailed with flame—in an empty house
Here we have come to the last ridge, the river
Crossed and the birds of summer left to silence
And we go forth, we go forth together
With our lank shadows dogging us, scrambling
Across the raw red stones

There is no parting

From friends, but only from the ways of friendship,
Nor from our lovers, though the forms of love
Change often as the landscape of this journey
To the dark valley where the gold bird burns
I say, Love is a wilderness and these bones
Proclaim no failure, but the death of youth
We say, You must be ready for the desert
Even among the orchards starred with blossom,
Even in spring, or at the waking moment
When the man turns to the woman, and both are afraid.
All who would save their life must find the desert—
The lover, the poet, the girl who dreams of Christ,
And the swift runner, crowned with another laurel
They all must face the sun, the red rock desert,
And see the burning of the metal bird
Until you have crossed the desert and faced that fire
Love is an evil, a shaking of the hand,
A sick pain draining courage from the heart

We do not know the end, we cannot tell
That valley's shape, nor whether the white fire
Will blind us instantly

Only we go

Forward, we go forward together, leaving
Nothing except a worn-out way of loving

V

Flesh is fire, the fire of flesh burns white
Through living limbs a cold fire in the blood
We must learn to live without love's food

We shall see the sky without birds, the wind
Will blow no leaves, will ruffle no new river
We shall walk in the desert together

Flesh is fire, frost and fire
We have turned in time, we shall see
The Phoenix burning under a rich tree
Flesh is fire

Solomon Eagle's drum shall be filled with sand
The dancers shall wear out their skilful feet,
The pretty lady be wrapped in a rough sheet

We go now, but others must follow
The rivers are drying, the trees are falling,
The red rock wilderness is calling

And they will find who linger in the garden
The way of time is not a river but
A pilferer who will not ask their pardon

Flesh is fire, frost and fire
Flesh is fire in this wilderness of fire
Which is our dwelling

SIDNEY KEYES

SPELT FROM SIBYL'S LEAVES

EARNEST, earthless, equal, attuneable, | vaulty, vol-
uminous, stupendous
Evening strains to be time's vast, | womb-of-all, home-
of-all, hearse-of-all night
Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, | her wild
hollow hoarlight hung to the height
Waste, her earliest stars, earl-stars, | stárs principal,
overbend us,
Fire-féaturing heaven For earth | her being has un-
bound, her dapple is at an end, as-
tray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs, | self in

self steepèd and páshed—quíte
 Disremembering, dismembering | all now Heart,
 you round me right
 With Our evening is over us, our night | whélms,
 whelms, ánd will end us
 Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish | damask the
 tool-smooth bleak light, black,
 Ever so black on it Óur tale, O óur oracle! | Let life,
 wáned, ah lét life wind
 Off hér once skeined stained véined variety | upon, all
 on twó spools, párt, pen, páck
 Now her all in twó flocks, twó folds—black, white, |
 right, wrong, reckon but, reck but, mind
 But these two, wáre of a wórld where bút these | twó
 tell, each off the óther, of a rack
 Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, |
 thóughts agáinst thoughts in groans grínd

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

ὦμοι πέπληγμαι καιρίαί τληγὴν εἶω

*Why should I speak of the nightingale? The nightingale
sings of adulterous wrong*

APENECK SWEENEY spreads his knees
 Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
 The zebra stripes along his jaw
 Swelling to maculate giraffe

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward to the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled, and hushed the shrunken seas,
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up,

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes,
The waiter brings in oranges,
Bananas, figs and hot-house grapes,

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws,
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws,

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league,
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin,

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud

T S ELIOT

THE STATUE

THE statue, tolerant through years of weather,
Spares the untidy Sunday throng its look,
Spares shopgirls knowledge of the fatal pallor
Under their evening colour,
Spares homosexuals, the crippled, the alone,
Extravagant perception of their failure,
Looks only, cynical, across them all
To the delightful Avenue and its lights

Where I sit, near the entrance to the Park,
The charming dangerous entrance to their need,
Dozens, a hundred men have lain till morning
And the preservative darkness waning,
Waking to want, to the day before, desire
For the ultimate good, Respect, to hunger waking,
Like the statue ruined but without its eyes,
Turned vaguely out at dawn for a new day

Fountains I hear behind me on the left,
See green, see natural life springing in May
To spend its summer sheltering our lovers,
Those walks so shortly to be over
The sound of water cannot startle them
Although their happiness runs out like water,
Of too much sweetness the expected drain
They trust their Spring, they have not seen the statue

Disfigurement is general Nevertheless
Winters have not been able to alter its pride,
If that expression is a pride remaining,
Coriolanus, and Rome burning,
An aristocracy that is no more
Scholars can keep their pity, from the ceiling
Watch blasted and superb inhabitants,
The wreck and justifying ruined stare

Since graduating from its years of flesh
The name has faded in the public mind
Or doubled which is this? The elder? Younger?
The statesman or the traveller?
Who first died, or who edited his works,
The lonely brother due to remain longer
By a quarter-century than the first born
Of that illustrious and lost family?

The lovers pass Not one of them can know
Or care which Humboldt is immortalized
If they glance up, they glance in passing,
An idle outcome of that pacing
Which never stops, and proves them animal,
These thighs, breasts, pointed eyes are not their
choosing,
But blind insignia by which are known
Season, excitement loosed upon this city

Turning the brilliant Avenue, red, green,
The laws of passage, marvellous hotels,
Beyond, the dark apartment where one summer
Night an insignificant dreamer,
Defeated occupant, will close his eyes
Mercifully on the expensive drama
Wherein he wasted so much skill, such faith,
And salvaged less than the intolerable statue

JOHN BERRYMAN

TO BROOKLYN BRIDGE

How many dawns, chill from his rippling rest
The seagull's wings shall dip and pivot him,
Shedding white rings of tumult, building high
Over the chained bay waters Liberty—

Then, with inviolate curve, forsake our eyes
As apparitional as sails that cross
Some page of figures to be filed away,
—Till elevators drop us from our day

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen,

And Thee, across the harbor, silver-paced
As though the sun took step of thee, yet left
Some motion ever unspent in thy stride,—
Implicitly thy freedom staying thee!

Out of some subway scuttle, cell or loft
A bedlamite speeds to thy parapets,
Tilting there momentarily, shrill shirt ballooning,
A jest falls from the speechless caravan

Down Wall, from girder into street noon leaks,
A rip-tooth of the sky's acetylene,
All afternoon the cloud-flown derricks turn
Thy cables breathe the North Atlantic still

And obscure as that heaven of the Jews,
Thy guerdon Accolade thou dost bestow
Of anonymity time cannot raise
Vibrant reprieve and pardon thou dost show

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choring strings!)
Terrific threshold of the prophet's pledge,
Prayer of pariah, and the lover's cry,—

Again the traffic lights that skim thy swift
Unfractioned idiom, immaculate sigh of stars,
Beading thy path—condense eternity
And we have seen night lifted in thine arms

Under thy shadow by the piers I waited,
Only in darkness is thy shadow clear
The City's fiery parcels all undone,
Already snow submerges an iron year

O Sleepless as the river under thee,
Vaulting the sea, the prairies' dreaming sod,
Unto us lowliest sometime sweep, descend
And of the curveship lend a myth to God

HART CRANE

THE DANCE

(from "*The Bridge*")

THE swift red flesh, a winter king—
Who squired the glacier woman down the sky?
She ran the neighing canyons all the spring,
She spouted arms, she rose with maize—to die

And in the autumn drouth, whose burnished hands
With mineral wariness found out the stone
Where prayers, forgotten, streamed the mesa sands?
He holds the twilight's dim, perpetual throne

Mythical brows we saw retiring—loth,
Disturbed and destined, into denser green
Greeting they sped us, on the arrow's oath
Now lie incorrigibly what years between

There was a bed of leaves, and broken play,
There was a veil upon you, Pocahontas, bride—
O Princess whose brown lap was virgin May,
And bridal flanks and eyes hid tawny pride

I left the village for dogwood By the canoe
Tugging below the mill-race, I could see
Your hair's keen crescent running, and the blue
First moth of evening take wing stealthily

What laughing chains the water wove and threw!
I learned to catch the trout's moon whisper, I
Drifted how many hours I never knew,
But, watching, saw that fleet young crescent die,—

And one star, swinging, take its place, alone,
Cupped in the larches of the mountain pass—
Until, immortally, it bled into the dawn
I left my sleek boat nibbling margin grass

I took the portage climb, then chose
A further valley-shed, I could not stop
Feet nozzled watery webs of upper flows,
One white veil gusted from the very top

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge,
Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends
And northward reaches in that violet wedge
Of Adirondack!—wisped of azure wands,

Over how many bluffs, tarns, streams I sped!
—And knew myself within some boding shade
Grey tepees tufting the blue knolls ahead,
Smoke swirling through the yellow chestnut glade

A distant cloud, a thunder-bud—it grew,
That blanket of the skies the padded foot
Within,—I hear it, 'til its rhythm drew,
—Siphoned the black pool from the heart's hot root!

A cyclone threshes in the turbine crest,
Swooping in eagle feathers down your back,
Know, Maquoqueeta, greeting, know death's best,
—Fall, Sachem, strictly as the tamarack!

A birch kneels All her whistling fingers fly
The oak grove circles in a crash of leaves;
The long moan of a dance is in the sky
Dance, Maquoqueeta Pocahontas grieves

And every tendon scurries toward the twangs
Of lightning deltaed down your saber hair
Now snaps the flint in every tooth, red fangs
And splay tongues thinly busy the blue air

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives before,
That casts his pelt, and lives beyond! Sprout, horn!
Spark, tooth! Medicine-man, relent, restore—
Lie to us—dance us back the tribal morn

Spears and assemblies black drums thrusting on—
O yelling battlements,—I, too, was liege
To rainbows currying each pulsant bone
Surpassed the circumstance, danced out the siege!

And buzzard-circleted, screamed from the stake,
I could not pick the arrows from my side
Wrapped in that fire, I saw more escorts wake—
Flickering, sprint up the hill groins like a tide

I heard the hush of lava wrestling your arms,
And stag teeth foam about the raven throat,
Flame cataracts of heaven in seething swarms
Fed down your anklets to the sunset's moat

Oh, like the lizard in the furious noon,
That drops his legs and colors in the sun,
—And laughs, pure serpent, Time itself, and moon
Of his own fate, I saw thy change begun!

And saw thee dive to kiss that destiny
Like one white meteor, sacrosanct and blent
At last with all that's consummate and free
There, where the first and last gods keep thy tent

Thewed of the levin, thunder-shod and lean,
Lo, through what infinite seasons dost thou gaze—
Across what bivouacs of thine angered slain,
And see'st thy bride immortal in the maize!

Totem and fire-gall, slumbering pyramid—
Though other calendars now stack the sky,
Thy freedom is her largesse, Prince, and hid
On paths thou knewest best to claim her by

High unto Labrador the sun strikes free
Her speechless dream of snow, and stirred again,
She is the torrent and the singing tree,
And she is virgin to the last of men .

West, west and south! winds over Cumberland
And winds across the llano grass resume
Her hair's warm sibilance Her breasts are fanned—
O stream by slope and vineyard—into bloom!

And when the caribou slant down for salt
Do arrows thirst and leap? Do antlers shine
Alert, star-triggered in the listening vault
Of dusk?—And are her perfect brows to thine?

We danced, O Brave, we danced beyond their farms,
In cobalt desert closures made our vows
Now is the strong prayer folded in thine arms,
The serpent with the eagle in the boughs

HART CRANE

ATLANTIS

(from "The Bridge")

*Music is then the knowledge of that which
relates to love in harmony and system*

PLATO

THROUGH the bound cable strands, the arching path
Upward, veering with light, the flight of strings,—
Taut miles of shuttling moonlight syncopate
The whispered rush, telepathy of wires
Up the index of night, granite and steel—
Transparent meshes—fleckless the gleaming staves—
Sibylline voices flicker, waveringly stream
As though a god were issue of the strings

And through that cordage, threading with its call
One arc synoptic of all tides below—
Their labyrinthine mouths of history
Pouring reply as though all ships at sea
Complighted in one vibrant breath made cry,—
"Make thy love sure—to weave whose song we ply!"
—From black embankments, moveless soundings hailed,
So seven oceans answer from their dream

And on, obliquely up bright carrier bars
New octaves trestle the twin monoliths
Beyond whose frosted capes the moon bequeaths
Two worlds of sleep (O arching strands of song!)—
Onward and up the crystal-flooded aisle
White tempest nets file upward, upward ring
With silver terraces the humming spars,
The loft of vision, palladium helm of stars

Sheerly the eyes, like seagulls stung with rime—
Slit and propelled by glistening fins of light—
Pick biting way up towering looms that press
Sidelong with flight of blade on tendon blade
—Tomorrows into yesteryear—and link
What cipher-script of time no traveller reads
But who, through smoking pyres of love and death,
Searches the timeless laugh of mythic spears

Like hails, farewells—up planet-sequined heights
Some trillion whispering hammers glimmer Tyre
Serenely, sharply up the long anvil cry
Of inchling æons silence rivets Troy
And you, aloft there—Jason! hesting Shout!
Still wrapping harness to the swarming air!
Silvery the rushing wake, surpassing call,
Beams yelling Æolus! splintered in the straits!

From gulfs unfolding, terrible of drums,
Tall Vision-of-the-Voyage, tensely spare—
Bridge, lifting night to cycloramic crest
Of deepest day—O Choir, translating time
Into what multitudinous Verb the suns
And synergy of waters ever fuse, recast
In myriad syllables,—Psalm of Cathay!
O Love, thy white, pervasive Paradigm

We left the haven hanging in the night—
Sheened harbor lanterns backward fled the keel
Pacific here at time's end, bearing corn,—
Eyes stammer through the pangs of dust and steel
And still the circular, indubitable frieze
Of heaven's meditation, yoking wave
To kneeling wave, one song devoutly binds—
The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings!

O Thou steeled Cognizance whose leap commits
The agile precincts of the lark's return,
Within whose lariat sweep encinctured sing
In single chrysalis the many twain,—
Of stars Thou art the stitch and stallion glow
And like an organ, Thou, with sound of doom—
Sight, sound and flesh Thou ledest from time's realm
As love strikes clear direction for the helm

Swift peal of secular light, intrinsic Myth
Whose fell unshadow is death's utter wound,—
O River-throated—iridescently upborne
Through the bright drench and fabric of our veins,
With white escarpments swinging into light,
Sustained in tears the cities are endowed
And justified conclamant with ripe fields
Revolving through their harvests in sweet torment

Forever Deity's glittering Pledge, O Thou
Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns
To rapt inception and beatitude,—
Always through blinding cables, to our joy,
Of thy white seizure springs the prophecy
Always through spiring cordage, pyramids
Of silver sequel, Deity's young name
Kinetic of white choiring wings ascends

Migrations that must needs void memory,
Inventions that cobblestone the heart,—
Unspeakable Thou Bridge to Thee, O Love
Thy pardon for this history, whitest Flower,
O Answerer of all,—Anemone,—
Now while thy petals spend the suns about us, hold—
(O Thou whose radiance doth inherit me)
Atlantis,—hold thy floating singer late!

So to thine Everpresence, beyond time,
Like spears ensanguined of one tolling star
That bleeds infinity—the orphic strings,
Sidereal phalanxes, leap and converge
—One Song, one Bridge of Fire! Is it Cathay,
Now pity steeps the grass and rainbows ring
The serpent with the eagle in the leaves
Whispers antiphonal in azure swing

HART CRANE

VOYAGES (II)

AND yet this great wink of eternity,
Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
Samite sheeted and processioned where
Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love,

Take this Sea, whose diapason knells
On scrolls of silver snowy sentences,
The sceptred terror of whose sessions rends
As her demeanors motion well or ill,
All but the pieties of lovers' hands

And onward, as bells off San Salvador
Salute the crocus lustres of the stars,
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,—
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell

Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours
And hasten while her penniless rich palms

Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,—
Hasten, while they are true,—sleep, death, desire,
Close round one instant in one floating flower

Bind us in time, O Seasons clear, and awe
O minstrel galleons of Carib fire,
Bequeath us to no earthly shore until
Is answered in the vortex of our grave
The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise

HART CRANE

FOR THE MARRIAGE OF FAUSTUS AND HELEN (III)

CAPPED arbiter of beauty in this street
That narrows darkly into motor dawn —
You, here beside me, delicate ambassador
Of intricate slain numbers that arise
In whispers, naked of steel,
religious gunman!

Who faithfully, yourself, will fall too soon,
And in other ways than as the wind settles
On the sixteen thrifty bridges of the city
Let us unbind our throats of fear and pity
We even,

Who drove speediest destruction
In corymbulous formations of mechanics,—
Who hurried the hill breezes, spouting malice
Plangent over meadows, and looked down
On rifts of torn and empty houses
Like old women with teeth unjubilant
That waited faintly, briefly and in vain

We know, eternal gunman, our flesh remembers
The tensile boughs, the nimble blue plateaus,
The mounted, yielding cities of the air!
That saddled sky that shook down vertical
Repeated play of fire—no hypogeum
Of wave or rock was good against one hour
We did not ask for that, but have survived,
And will persist to speak again before
All stubble streets that have not curved
To memory, or known the ominous lifted arm
That lowers down the arc of Helen's brow
To saturate with blessing and dismay

A goose, tobacco and cologne—
Three winged and gold-shod prophecies of heaven,
The lavish heart shall always have to leaven
And spread with bells and voices, and atone
The abating shadows of our conscript dust

Anchises' navel, dripping of the sea,—
The hands Erasmus dipped in gleaming tides,
Gathered the voltage of blown blood and vine;
Delve upward for the new and scattered wine,
O brother-thief of time, that we recall
Laugh out the meagre penance of their days
Who dare not share with us the breath released,
The substance drilled and spent beyond repair
For golden, or the shadow of gold hair
Distinctly praise the years, whose volatile
Blamed bleeding hands extend and thresh the height
The imagination spans beyond despair,
Outpacing bargain, vocable and prayer

HART CRANE

ONCE BY THE PACIFIC

THE shattered water made a misty din
Great waves looked over others coming in,
And thought of doing something to the shore
That water never did to land before
The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
The shore was lucky in being backed by cliff,
The cliff in being backed by continent,
It looked as if a night of dark intent
Was coming, and not only a night, an age
Someone had better be prepared for rage
There would be more than ocean-water broken
Before God's last *Put out the Light* was spoken

ROBERT FROST

THE RETURN

NIGHT and we heard heavy and cadenced hoofbeats
Of troops departing, the last cohorts left
By the North Gate That night some listened late
Leaning their eyelids toward Septentrion

Morning flared and the young tore down the trophies
And warring ornaments arches were strong
And in the sun but stone, no longer conquest
Circled our columns, all our state was down

CONVERSATION

WHETHER the moorings are invisible
Or gone, we said we could not tell
But argument held one thing sure
That none of us that night could well endure
The ship is locked with fog, no man aboard
Can see what he is moving toward,
There's little food, less love, no sleep,
The sea is dark and we are told it's deep

Where is an officer who knows this coast?
If all such men long since have faced
Downward, one summon Who knows how,
With what fidelity his voice heard now
Could shout directions from the ocean's floor?
Traditional characters no more
Their learned simple parts rehearse,
But bed them down at last from the time's curse

A broken log fell out upon the hearth,
The flaming harbinger come forth
Of holocausts that night and day
Shrivel from the mind its sovereignty
We watched the embers cool, those embers brought
To one man there the failing thought
Of cities stripped of knowledge, men,
Our continent a wilderness again

These are conclusions of the night, we said,
And drank, and were not satisfied
The fire died down, smoke in the air
Took the alarming postures of our fear,
The overhead horror, in the padded room

The man who cannot tell his name,
The guns and enemies that face
Into this delicate and dangerous place

JOHN BERRYMAN

MUNICH ELEGY NO 1

THOSE occasions involving the veering of axles
When the wheel's bloody spikes like Arabian armaments
Release Passchendaele on us because it is time, bring
Also with blood to the breast the boon to the bosom
I saw it happen, had near me the gun and the tear
Those occasions are all elegiac The wheel and the wish
Turn in a turtle the chaos of life It is death,
Death like roulette turning our wish to its will

I see a scene with a smother of snow over Love
I know Spring will arise and later the swallow return,
I know, but my torso stands bogged in a load of time,
Like Love lying under the smother of our death and our
Dread How soon shall the Spring bird arise and the
Summer bells hum with the murmur of our name?

Soon, soon,
Soon the green room goes blue with the last autumn

I sip at suicide in bedrooms or dare pessimistic stars,
Keep pigeons with messages or make tame apes
Commemorate in mime the master me who must go,
Or commit crimes of rage or rape to ease the ache
I promise these cannot precipitate fate No,
To-morrow it is not, it is not to-day, it is not
Wednesday or Thursday It is the greatest day

That morning not the rose shall rise or dog dance,
Kings with conscience and queens with child sleep long,
For duty is useless, the soldier and sailor glance
Down at their guns with a grin, but they are wrong
The dodo shall rule for a moment, and the Thames
Remember Invalids and paralytics shall sing

‘No more, no more!’

I shall hear the ceremony of heaven and God’s roar

What awaits is the veer of the lever and wheel
When the hands cross at midnight and noon, the future
Sweeps on with a sigh—but on this occasion Time
Swells like a wave at a wall and bursts to eternity
I await when the engine of lilies and lakes and love
Reaching its peak of power blows me sky high, and I

Come down to rest

On the shape I made in the ground where I used to lie

O widow, do not weep, do not weep! Or wife
Cry in the corner of the window with a child by—
Look how Tottenham and the Cotswolds, with
More mass than a man, lie easy under the sky,
Also awaiting change they cannot understand,
‘I have heaven a haven in my hand,’ say,

Like the boy

Cornering butterflies or nothing in cupped hands

The tragedy is Time foreshadowing its climax
Thus in the stage of time the minor moth is small
But prophesies the Fokker with marvellous wings
Mottled with my sun’s gold and your son’s blood
The crazy anthropoid crawls on time’s original
That casts his giant on the contemporary scene

That spreadeagled shadow

Covers with horror the green Abyssinian meadow

Lovers on Sunday in the rear seats of cinemas
Kiss deep and dark, for is it the last kiss?
Children sailing on swings in municipal parks
Swing high, swing high into the reach of the sky,
Leave, leave the sad star that is about to die
Laugh, my comedians, who may not laugh again—
 Soon, soon,
Soon Jeremiah Job will be walking among men

GEORGE BARKER

THE FESTIVAL

THE cello sobs, the symphony begins,
The fever flutters in the violins,
A hundred earrings tremble in the dark,
Sleek in their velvet squat the seven sins

And sauntering down the river you and I
Discern the baffling planets in the sky,
Through the tall branches watch the tell-tale feet
And hear the voices of the summer sigh

The castle fades, the distant mountains fade,
The silence falters on the misty glade,
The ducal lanterns hover on the hull,
The cathedral moves into the evening shade

Softly upon you falls the casual light
Your hair grows golden and your eyes are bright
And through the warm and lucid Austrian air
In love our arms go wandering to-night

Far to the east extend the ancient seas,
The dear Danubian banks, the archaic trees
Among whose pillars still the restless dead
Dispel their homesick odours on the breeze,

Crete blows the night across her wicked floors
And Sicily now locks her little doors,
And up the Adriatic leap the clouds
And hurl a shadow on her sucking shores

And northward through the benches of the park
Stealthily moves the thin conspiring dark
The thieves and fairies huddle by the bridge
And hear the sickly hounds of Brussels bark

In Norway demons dwell among the caves
Whose walls are bitten by the haggard waves
And on the emerald Carpathian slopes
The rancid wolves explore the village graves,

Each hungry orphan climbs into his bed
Afraid to face the usual midnight dread,
Across the cobbles past the pock-marked church
The hags go hustling with their crusts of bread,

The cripples stumble slowly up the stairs
And toss their curses on the stuffy airs,
The cellar-eyed, the sleepers in the ditches
Mutter their simple paranoiac prayers

Listen, the rhythms of the night begin
The little lamps are flickering in the inn
Out through the door into the garden glides
The fretful elegance of the mandolin

The night flies on, the coming tempest flies,
And all our lovely neighbours close their eyes
Silent the paths of longing and regret
Which all our learning taught us to despise

And you and I look out upon the stream
And by the lantern's mild and mirrored gleam
The inverted figures on the shore perform
The silly baroque postures of a dream

O who is there to answer you and me ?
The sky, the summer, the prolific sea ?
The ground is shaking and we must not wait
Who one more moment feel alone and free

And hear the angels with their wingèd fears
Like serpents hiss their carols in our ears
And rediscover on this festive night
The hatreds of a hundred thousand years

FREDERIC PROKOSCH

PUB

THE glasses are raised, the voices drift into laughter,
The clock hands have stopped, the beer in the hands of
the soldiers
Is blond, the faces are calm and the fingers can feel
The wet touch of glasses, the glasses print rings on the
table,
The smoke rings curl and go up and dissolve near the
ceiling,
This moment exists and' is real

What is reality? Do not ask that At this moment
Look at the butterfly eyes of the girls, watch the bar-
maid's
Precision in pouring a Scotch, and remember this day,
This day at this moment you were no longer an island,
People were friendly, the clock in the hands of the soldiers
For this moment had nothing to say

And nothing to say and the glasses are raised, we are
happy
Drinking through time, and a world that is gentle and
helpless
Survives in the pub and goes up in the smoke of our
breath,
The regulars doze in the corner, the talkers are fluent,
Look now in the faces of those you love and remember
That you are not thinking of death

But thinking of death as the lights go out and the glasses
Are lowered, the people go out and the evening
Goes out, ah, goes out like a light and leaves you alone,
As the heart goes out, the door opens out into darkness,
The foot takes a step, and the moment, the moment of
falling
Is here, you go down like a stone,

Are you able to meet the disaster, able to meet the
Cold air of the street and the touch of corruption, the
rotting
Fingers that murder your own in the grip of love?
Can you bear to find hateful the faces you once thought
were lovely,
Can you bear to find comfort alone in the evil and
stunted,
Can you bear to abandon the dove?

The houses are shut and the people go home, we are
left in
Our island of pain, the clocks start to move and the
powerful
To act, there is nothing now, nothing at all
To be done for the trouble is real and the verdict is
final
Against us The clocks go round faster and faster And
fast as confetti
The days are beginning to fall

JULIAN SYMONS

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives,
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made

A psychopathic god
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave,
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief
We must suffer them all again

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream,
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire

To make this fort assume
The furniture of home,
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart,
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow,
“*I will* be true to the wife,
I’ll concentrate more on my work,”
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street

And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone,
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police,
We must love one another or die

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupour lies,
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame

W H AUDEN

SCYROS

snuffle and sniff and handkerchief

THE doctor punched my vein
The captain called me Cain
Upon my belly sat the sow of fear
With coins on either eye
The President came by
And whispered to the braids what none could hear

High over where the storm
Stood steadfast cruciform
The golden eagle sank in wounded wheels
White negroes laughing still
Crept fiercely on Brazil
Turning the navies upward on their keels

Now one by one the trees
Stripped to their naked knees
To dance upon the heaps of shrunk dead
The roof of England fell
Great Paris tolled her bell
And China stanchd her milk and wept for bread

No island singly lay
But lost its name that day
The Ainu dived across the plunging sands
From dawn to dawn to dawn
King George's birds came on
Strafing the tulips from his children's hands

Thus in the classic sea
Southeast from Thessaly
The dynamited mermen washed ashore
And tritons dressed in steel
Trolled heads with rod and reel
And dredged potatoes from the Aegean floor

Hot is the sky and green
Where Germans have been seen
The moon leaks metal on the Atlantic fields
Pink boys in birthday shrouds
Loop lightly through the clouds
Or coast the peaks of Finland on their shields

That prophet year by year
Lay still but could not hear
Where scholars tapped to find his new remains
Gog and Magog ate pork
In vertical New York
And war began next Monday on the Danes

KARL SHAPIRO

I SING OF OLAF

i sing of Olaf glad and big
whose warmest heart recoiled at war
a conscientious object-or

his wellbelovéd colonel (trig
westpointer most succinctly bred)
took erring Olaf soon in hand,
but—though an host of overjoyed
noncoms (first knocking on the head
him) do through icy waters roll
that helplessness which others stroke
with brushes recently employed
anent this muddy toiletbowl,
while kindred intellects evoke
allegiance per blunt instruments—
Olaf (being to all intents
a corpse and wanting any rag
upon what God unto him gave)
responds, without getting annoyed
“i will not kiss your f ing flag”

straightway the silver bird looked grave
(departing hurriedly to shave)

but—though all kinds of officers
(a yearning nation's blueeyed pride)
their passive prey did kick and curse
until for wear their clarion
voices and boots were much the worse,
and egged the firstclassprivates on
his rectum wickedly to tease
by means of skilfully applied
bayonets roasted hot with heat—
Olaf (upon what were once knees)
does almost ceaselessly repeat
“there is some s i will not eat”

our president, being of which
assertions duly notified
threw the yellowsonofabitch
into a dungeon, where he died

Christ (of His mercy infinite)
i pray to see, and Olaf, too

preponderatingly because
unless statistics lie he was
more brave than me more blond than you

E E CUMMINGS

THE MAN HE KILLED

"HAD he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so my foe of course he was,
That's clear enough, although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I,
Was out of work, had sold his traps—
No other reason why

"Yes, quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown "

THOMAS HARDY

LARGO

For William Abrahams

OF those whom I have known, the few and fatal friends,
All were ambiguous, deceitful, not to trust
But like attracts its like, no doubt, and mirrors must
Be faithful to the image that they see Light bends
Only the spectrum in the glass
Prime colors are the ones which pass
The less distorted, Friendship ends
In hatred or in love, ambivalence of lust
Either, like Hamlet, haunted, doting on the least
Reflection of remorse, or else, like Richard, lost
In vanity The frozen hands
That hold the mirror make demands,
And flexing fingers clutch the vision in a vise
Each one betrays himself the ghostly glazier understands
Why he must work in ice

All friends are false but you are true the paradox
Is perfect tense in present time, whose parallel
Extends to meeting point, where, more than friends, we
fell
Together on the other side of love, where clocks
And mirrors were reversed to show
Ourselves as only we could know,
Where all the doors had secret locks
With double keys, and where the sliding panel, well
Concealed, gave us our exit through the palace wall
There we have come and gone twin kings, who roam at
will
Behind the court, behind the backs
Of consort queens, behind the racks
On which their favorites lie who told them what to do.

For every cupid with a garland round the throne still
lacks

The look I give to you

The goddess who presided at our birth was first
Of those in fancy clothes fate made us hate to fight
The Greeks with gifts, good looks, so clever, so polite,
Like lovers quick to charm, disarming, too well versed

In violence to wear weapons while

They take a city for a smile

By doomed ancestral voices cursed

To wander from the womb, their claws plucked out our
sight,

Who nighttime thinking we are followed down the street
By blind men like ourselves, turn round again, and wait,

Only to hear the steps go past

Us standing lonely there, at last

Aware how we have failed, are now the Trojan fool

For all the arty Hellenistic tarts in plaster cast

The ones who always rule

We are alone with every sailor lost at sea

Whose drowning is repeated day by day The sound

Of bells from buoys mourning sunken ships rings round

Us, warning away the launch that journeys you and me

On last Cytherean trips in spring

There the rocks are where sirens sing

Like nightingales of death But we,

Hearing excitements, music for the ear, have bound

Our voyage to find its ending where the sterile sand

Spends pearls and coral on a skull The sailing wind

Is with us now and then blows high

As halcyon clouds across the sky

Fast falls to doldrums while the moon is also young,

Untided, half to harvest whole See how our sirens die

Before their song is sung

What we have always wanted, never had, the ease,
The fame of athletes, such happy heroes at a game,
Beloved by every likely lad, is not the same
As what we have these measured methods how to please
An indolent and doubtful boy,
Who plays at darts, breaks for a toy
The sometimes valued heart Why seize
The moment in the garden, on the stair, to blame
Our nameless Eros for his daring? Too little time
Is left for love When we come back, what welcome home
Will he award our wounded eyes?
What uniform be his disguise
In dreams when sleeping sentries always march away
Once more to war? Now is our novelty we may surprise
The faun at end of day

Make no mistake, my soldier Listen bugle calls
Revoke your leisure like a leave, invade your peace
With orders on the run, and, loud as bombs, police
Your life for death The poet's blood-trick tower falls
Even his vanity is gone,
Which leaves the loser all alone
Not private poems, but public brawls
Demand his drumbeat history, the pulse that must in-
crease
Until his heart is ransomed from its jewel Revise
Your verse Consider what king's killer did to those
Who wrote their way between the shells
That last delusive time Farewells
Are folly to our serpent queen She will not sign
Discharge of conscience for a masterpiece, but, hissing,
tells
Failure in every line

We are the mountaineers who perish on the slopes
Of heaven high and perfect Himalayan peak

Exhausted by the cold, we can no longer speak
To one another—only signal by the ropes
Those best before us have, alas,
Plunged through a gentian-blue crevasse
The snow-blind flaw Their glacial hopes
Shine as a stream of desperate stars, icebound, and bleak,
That mock their nimbused glory from a frigid lake
Where we stand now, they stood much farther climbing
like

Legendary guides But traps
Were waiting for their last collapse
Inviting visions from the moon world air—misplace
A step to follow, dance to death They fell, so we, per-
haps,
May do as well with grace

Now noble guests depart for good, wearing our loss
Like flowers O Damon, decked with asphodel, who
moves

Among the shadow dwellers But he shall hear the hooves
Of unicorns at gallop, see them, coursing, toss

Their fluted horns above the cool

Unpoisoned waters in love's pool,

And, kneeling, lay their heads across

A beatific virgin's breast The day approves

His passage sunlight on the secret river gives

Bright benediction to his boat Elysian waves

Bear him, the hero, far from us

To join the gods Illustrious!

No words may worship him The laurel is not all

That withers at the roots, since we, lamenting him, are
thus

Autumnal for his fall

Armed, say you? Armed, my lord So, likewise, you and
I,

Who with the butchered ghost must stalk the battlements,
Shall watch—cold-comfort guards—how lonely lie the
tents

Where strangers sleep together just before they die

Look where their banners in the air

Are half-staff hung The cockcrow dare

Of dawn is mourning in the sky

Our thoughts like bayonets blood time What precedents

Of passion shall we use to brave the coward? Once

Bombs are as roses, will he kiss the black-heart prince?

Honor, more heavy than the sea,

May overwhelm both you and me

To give no quarter choice at all gay boys, whom war

Won janizary, youths, who flung away their shields So

we

Are mort a Singapore

Narcissus, doubled in the melting mirror, smiles

To see himself outfaced by tears, and, sorrowing, hands

His ace of love to harlequin of hearts, who stands

The distant edge of laughter Time's joker still compiles

Trick score of triumph, trumps the queen

To play his knave of emeralds Green

Gamester reflects the water guiles

Of palming, reads the gambled cards, and then demands

Another pack to shuffle But the glass partner bends

The fate five fingers round a saint's stigmata, wounds

By dealing diamonds from his nails

No marveled metaphor avails

To vantage this beloved impersonator twin,

Whose coronet, crown crystal, qualifies a peer My voice

fails

In your name poems begin

DUNSTAN THOMPSON

SOLDIERS BATHING

THE sea at evening moves across the sand
Under a reddening sky I watch the freedom of a band
Of soldiers who belong to me Stripped bare
For bathing in the sea, they shout and run in the warm
air,
Their flesh, worn by the trade of war, revives
And my mind towards the meaning of it strives

All's pathos now The body that was gross,
Rank, ravening, disgusting in the act or in repose,
All fever, filth and sweat, its bestial strength
And bestial decay, by pain and labor grows at length
Fragile and luminous Poor bare forked animal,
Conscious of his desires and needs and flesh that rise and
fall,
Stands in the soft air, tasting after toil
The sweetness of his nakedness letting the sea-waves
coil
Their frothy tongues about his feet, forgets
His hatred of the war, its terrible pressure that begets
That machinery of death and slavery,
Each being a slave and making slaves of others, finds
that he
Remembers his proud freedom in a game,
Mocking himself, and comically mimics fear and shame

He plays with death and animality
And, reading in the shadows of his pallid flesh, I see
The idea of Michelangelo's cartoon
Of soldiers bathing, breaking off before they were half
done
At some sortie of the enemy, an episode

Of the Pisan wars with Florence I remember how he
showed

Their muscular limbs that clamber from the water
And heads that turn across the shoulder, eager for the
slaughter,

Forgetful of their bodies that are bare
And hot to buckle on and use the weapons lying there
—And I think too of the theme another found
When, shadowing men's bodies on a sinister red ground—
Was it Ucello or Pollaiuolo?—

Painted a naked battle warriors, straddled, hacked the
foe,

Dug their bare toes into the soil and slew
The brother-naked man who lay between their feet and
drew

His lips back from his teeth in a grimace

They were Italians who knew war's sorrow and disgrace
And showed the thing suspended, stripped A theme
Born out of the experience of that horrible extreme
Of war beneath a sky where the air flows
With *Lachrimae Christi* For that rage, that bitterness,
those blows

That hatred of the slain, what could it be
But indirectly or directly a commentary
On the Crucifixion? and the picture burns
With indignation and pity and despair by turns
Because it is the obverse of the scene
Where Christ hangs murdered, stripped, upon the Cross

I mean,
That is the explanation of its rage

And we too have our bitterness and pity that engage
Blood, spirit in this war But night begins,

Night of the mind who nowadays is conscious of our
sins ?

Though every human deed concerns our blood,
And even we must know what nobody has understood,
That some great love is over all we do
And that is what has driven us to fury, for so few
Can suffer all the terror of that love
The terror of that love has set us spinning in this groove
Greasy with our blood

These dry themselves and dress,
Resume their shirts, forget the fright and shame of
nakedness

Because to love is terrible we prefer
The freedom of our crimes, yet, as I drink the dusky air,
I feel a strange delight that fills me full,
Strange gratitude, as if evil itself were beautiful,
And kiss the wound in thought, while in the west
I watch a streak of red that might have issued from
Christ's breast

F T PRINCE

GREATER LOVE

RED lips are not so red

As the stained stones kissed by the English dead
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure
O Love, your eyes lose lure
When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude

Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,

Rolling and rolling there

Where God seems not to care,

Till the fierce love they bear

Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude

Your voice sings not so soft,—

Though even as wind murmuring through rafters
loft,—

Your dear voice is not clear,

Gentle, and evening clear,

As theirs whom none now hear

Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that
coughed

Heart, you were never hot,

Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot,

And though your hand be pale,

Paler are all which trail

Your cross through flame and hail

Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not

WILFRED OWEN

STRANGE MEETING

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped

Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped

Through granites which Titanic wars had groined

Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,

Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred

Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall;
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell
With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained,
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan,
"Strange, friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn"
"None," said the other, "save the undone years,
The hopelessness Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also, I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left,
Which must die now I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery,
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled
Then when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds, not on the cess of war
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were
I am the enemy you killed, my friend

I knew you in this dark, for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed
I parried, but my hands were loath and cold
Let us sleep now "

WILFRED OWEN

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

WHAT passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons
No mockeries for them, no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells,
And bugles calling for them from sad shires

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall,
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds

WILFRED OWEN

A SOLDIER

HE is that fallen lance that lies as hurled,
That lies unlifted now, come dew, come rust,
But still lies pointed as it plowed the dust
If we who sight along it round the world,
See nothing worthy to have been its mark,

It is because like men we look too near,
Forgetting that as fitted to the sphere,
Our missiles always make too short an arc
They fall, they rip the grass, they intersect
The curve of earth, and striking, break their own,
They make us cringe for metal-point on stone
But this we know, the obstacle that checked
And tripped the body, shot the spirit on
Further than target ever showed or shone

ROBERT FROST

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

I HAVE a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair
It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,

Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous

ALAN SEEGER

SPRING 1942

ONCE as we were sitting by
The falling sun, the thickening air,
The chaplain came against the sky
And quietly took a vacant chair

And under the tobacco smoke
"Freedom," he said, and "Good" and "Duty"
We stared as though a savage spoke
The scene took on a singular beauty

And we made no reply to that
Obscure, remote communication,
But only stared at where the flat
Meadow dissolved in vegetation

And thought O sick, insatiable
And constant lust, O death, our future,
O revolution in the whole
Of human use of man and nature!

ROY FULLER

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE, BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

THEY went forth to battle, but they always fell,
 Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields,
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell
 They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
 They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon, yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell

It was a secret music that they heard,
 A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace,
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
 Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
 On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase
Ah, then by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard

They went forth to battle, but they always fell,
 Their might was not the might of lifted spears,
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well
 Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears,
 Their names are old sad stories in men's ears,
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell

SHAEMAS O'SHEEI

ULTIMA RATIO REGUM

THE guns spell money's ultimate reason
In letters of lead on the spring hillside
But the boy lying dead under the olive trees
Was too young and too silly
To have been notable to their important eye
He was a better target for a kiss

When he lived, tall factory hooters never summoned him
Nor did restaurant plate-glass doors revolve to wave
 him in
His name never appeared in the papers
The world maintained its traditional wall
Round the dead with their gold sunk deep as a well,
Whilst his life, intangible as a Stock Exchange rumour,
 drifted outside

O too lightly he threw down his cap
One day when the breeze threw petals from the trees
The unflowering wall sprouted with guns,
Machine-gun anger quickly scythed the grasses,
Flags and leaves fell from hands and branches,
The tweed cap rotted in the nettles

Consider his life which was valueless
In terms of employment, hotel ledgers, news files
Consider One bullet in ten thousand kills a man
Ask Was so much expenditure justified
On the death of one so young and so silly
Lying under the olive trees, O world, O death?

STEPHEN SPENDER

A REFUSAL TO MOURN THE DEATH, BY FIRE, OF A CHILD IN LONDON

NEVER until the mankind making
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness
Tells with silence the last light breaking
And the still hour
Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

And I must enter again the round
Zion of the water bead
And the synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound
Or sow my salt seed
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn

The majesty and burning of the child's death
I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath
With any further
Elegy of innocence and youth

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends,
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames
After the first death, there is no other

DYLAN THOMAS

SOLILOQUY IN AN AIR-RAID

THE will dissolves, the heart becomes excited,
Skull suffers formication, moving words
Fortuitously issue from my hand
The winter heavens, seen all day alone,
Assume the color of aircraft over the phthisic
Guns

But who shall I speak to with this poem?

Something was set between the words and the world
I watched today, perhaps the necrotomy
Of love or the spectre of pretense, a vagueness,
But murdering their commerce like a tariff

Inside the poets the words are changed to desire,
And formulations of feeling are lost in action
Which hourly transmutes the basis of common speech
Our dying is effected in the streets,
London an epicentrum, to the stench
And penny prostitution in the shelters
Dare not extend the hospital and bogus
Hands of propaganda

Ordered this year
A billion tons of broken glass and rubble,
Blockade of chaos, the other requisites
For the reduction of Europe to a rabble
Who can observe this save as a frightened child
Or careful diarist? And who can speak
And still retain the tones of this civilization?
The verse that was the speech of observation,—
Jonson's cartoon of the infant bourgeoisie,

Shakespeare's immense assertion that man alone
Is almost the equal of his environment,
The Chinese wall of class round Pope, the Romantic
Denunciation of origin and mould,—
Is sunk in the throat between the opposing voices

*I am the old life, which promises even less
In the future, and guarantees your loss*

*And I the new, in which your function and
Your form will be dependent on my end*

Kerensky said of Lenin *I must kindly
Orientate him to what is going on*
Watching the images of fabulous girls
On cinema screens, the liberal emotion
Of the slightly inhuman poet wells up in me,
As irrelevant as Kerensky It is goodbye
To the social life which permitted melancholy
And madness in the isolation of its writers,
To a struggle as inconclusive as the Hundred
Years' War The air, as welcome as morphia,
This *rich ambiguous aesthetic air*
Which now I breathe, is an effective diet
Only for actors in the lonely box
The author mumbles to himself, the play
Unfolds spontaneous as the human wish,
As autumn dancing, vermillion on rocks

ROY FULLER

FUTILITY

MOVE him in the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know

Think how it wakes the seeds,—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
Full-nerved—still warm—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

WILFRED OWEN .

TO A CONSCRIPT OF 1940

*Qui n'a pas une fois désespéré de l'honneur,
Ne sera jamais un héros*—George Bernanos

SOLDIER passed me in the freshly-fallen snow,
His footsteps muffled, his face unearthly grey,
And my heart gave a sudden leap
As I gazed on a ghost of five-and-twenty years ago

I shouted Halt! and my voice had the old accustomed
ring

And he obeyed it as it was obeyed
In the shrouded days when I too was one
Of an army of young men marching

Into the unknown He turned towards me and I said
'I am one of those who went before you
Five-and-twenty years ago one of the many who never
returned,
Of the many who returned and yet were dead

We went where you are going, into the rain and the
mud,
We fought as you will fight
With death and darkness and despair,
We gave what you will give—our brains and our blood

We think we gave in vain The world was not renewed
There was hope in the homestead and anger in the
streets
But the old world was restored and we returned
To the dreary field and workshop, and the immemorial
feud

Of rich and poor Our victory was our defeat
Power was retained where power had been misused
And youth was left to sweep away
The ashes that the fire had strewn beneath our feet

But one thing we learned there is no glory in the deed
Until the soldier wears a badge of tarnished braid,
There are heroes who have heard the rally and have seen
The glitter of a garland round their head

Theirs is the hollow victory They are deceived
But you, my brother and my ghost, if you can go
Knowing that there is no reward, no certain use
In all your sacrifice, then honour is reprieved

To fight without hope is to fight with grace,
The self reconstructed, the false heart repaired '
Then I turned with a smile, and he answered my salute
As he stood against the fretted hedge, which was like
white lace

HERBERT READ

NOSTALGIA

My soul stands at the window of my room,
And I ten thousand miles away,
My days are filled with Ocean's sound of doom,
Salt and cloud and the bitter spray
Let the wind blow, for many a man shall die

My selfish youth, my books with gilded edge,
Knowledge and all gaze down the street,
The potted plants upon the window ledge
Gaze down with selfish lives and sweet
Let the wind blow, for many a man shall die

My night is now her day, my day her night,
So I lie down, and so I rise,
The sun burns close, the star is losing height,
The clock is hunted down the skies
Let the wind blow, for many a man shall die

Truly a pin can make the memory bleed,
A world explode the inward mind

And turn the skulls and flowers never freed
Into the air, no longer blind
Let the wind blow, for many a man shall die

Laughter and grief join hands Always the heart
Clumps in the breast with heavv stride,
The face grows lined and wrinkled like a chart,
The eyes bloodshot with tears and tide
Let the wind blow, for manv a man shall die

KARL SHAPIRO

THE INFLATABLE GLOBE

WHEN the allegorical man came calling,
He told us all he would show us a trick,
And he showed us a flat but inflatable ball
"Look at this ball," he told us all,
"Look at the lines marked on this ball "
We looked at the ball and the lines on the ball
England was red, and France was blue,
Germany orange and Russia brown
"Look at this ball," he told us all,
"With a blow of my breath I inflate this ball "
He blew, and it bounced, and bouncing, falling,
He bounced it against the wall with a kick
"But without my breath it will flatten and fall,"
Said the allegorical man, and down
Flat came his hand and squashed the ball,
And it fell on the floor with no life at all
Once his breath had gone out of the ball
It seemed to us all a stupid trick

THEODORE SPENCER

Their eyes are rid
Of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever
And terror's first constriction over,
Their hearts remain small-drawn
Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle
Now long since ironed,
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned

IV

Happy the soldier home, with not a notion
How somewhere, every dawn, some men attack, .
And many sighs are drained
Happy the lad whose mind was never trained
His days are worth forgetting more than not
He sings along the march
Which we march taciturn, because of dusk,
The long, forlorn, relentless trend
From larger day to huger night

V

We wise, who with a thought besmurch
Blood over all our soul,
How should we see our task
But through his blunt and lashless eyes?
Alive, he is not vital overmuch,
Dying, not mortal overmuch,
Nor sad, nor proud,
Nor curious at all
He cannot tell
Old men's placidity from his

But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,
 That they should be as stones,
 Wretched are they, and mean
 With paucity that never was simplicity
 By choice they made themselves immune
 To pity and whatever moans in man
 Before the last sea and the hapless stars,
 Whatever mourns when many leave these shores,
 Whatever shares
 The eternal reciprocity of tears

WILFRED OWEN

ARMS AND THE BOY

LET the boy try along this bayonet-blade
 How cold steel is, and keen with hunger or blood,
 Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash,
 And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-heads
 Which long to nuzzle in the hearts of lads,
 Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,
 Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death

For his teeth seem for laughing round an apple
 There lurk no claws behind his fingers supple,
 And god will grow no talons at his heels,
 Nor antlers through the thickness of his curls

WILFRED OWEN

ANNUAL LEGEND

A MILLION butterflies rose up from South America,
All together, and flew in a gold storm toward Spain
Eastward, the annual legend, a shining amber cloud
Driven homeward as it had been and would be again
Since the conquerors searching the harder shining
Brought for the bargain a handful of wings of flame

Balboa lies dead somewhere and Pizarro's helmet
Is a spider's kingdom, yet here was the arrogant breath
And the dangerous plume burning across the foreign air
That danced like an ancient Andalusian noon
A blaze, it rose leaving the jungle dark and the leaves
Heavy with silence, and the wheeltracks folding to doom
Where majesty wandered

A million butterflies,
Wheeling eastward from the soil where the nugget lies
lost,
Turned homeward in vast diurnal fire that marched one
day
Burning toward Spain, and after that, for a while,
Spread like a field of death, gold on the sea

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

THE SOLDIER

IF I should die, think only this of me,
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed,

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England
given,
Her sights and sounds, dreams happy as her day,
And laughter, learnt of friends, and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven

RUPERT BROOK

DEAD MAN'S DUMP

THE plunging limbers over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight,
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like sceptres old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear

The wheels lurched over sprawled dead
But pained them not, though their bones crunched,
Their shut mouths made no moan
They lie there huddled, friend and foeman,
Man born of man, and born of woman,
And shells go crying over them
From night till night and now

Earth has waited for them,
All the time of their growth
Fretting for their decay
Now she has them at last!
In the strength of their strength
Suspended—stopped and held

What fierce imaginings their dark souls lit?
Earth! Have they gone into you?
Somewhere they must have gone,
And flung on your hard back
Is their souls' sack,
Emptied of God-ancestralled essences
Who hurled them out? Who hurled?

None saw their spirits' shadow shake the grass,
Or stood aside for the half used life to pass
Out of those doomed nostrils and the doomed mouth,
When the swift iron burning bee
Drained the wild honey of their youth

What of us who, flung on the shrieking pyre,
Walk, our usual thoughts untouched,
Our lucky limbs as on ichor fed,
Immortal seeming ever?
Perhaps when the flames beat loud on us,
A fear may choke in our veins
And the startled blood may stop

The air is loud with death,
The dark air spurts with fire,
The explosions ceaseless are
Timelessly now, some minutes past,

These dead strode time with vigorous life,
Till the shrapnel called 'An end'
But not to all In bleeding pangs
Some borne on stretchers dreamed of home,
Dear things, war-blotted from their hearts

A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face,
His shook shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too deep
For human tenderness

They left this dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the cross roads

Burnt black by strange decay
Their sinister faces lie,
The lid over each eye,
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they,
Joined to the great sunk silences

Here is one not long dead
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said,
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels
Swift for the end to break
Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight,
'Will they come? Will they ever come?'
Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,

And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight

So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,
We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face

ISAAC ROSENBERG

STILL FALLS THE RAIN

The Raids, 1940 Night and Dawn

STILL falls the Rain—
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails
Upon the Cross

Still falls the Rain
With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed
to the hammer-beat
In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet

On the Tomb
Still falls the Rain
In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and
the human brain
Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain

Still falls the Rain
At the feet of the Starved Man hung upon the Cross.
Christ that each day, each night, nails there, have mercy
on us—

On Dives and on Lazarus
Under the rain the sore and the gold are as one

Still falls the Rain—
Still falls the blood from the Starved Man's wounded
Side
He bears in His Heart all wounds,—those of the light
that died,
The last faint spark
In the self-murdered heart, the wounds of the sad un-
comprehending dark,

The wounds of the baited bear,—
The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat
On his helpless flesh the tears of the hunted hare

Still falls the Rain—
Then—O Ile leape up to my God who pulles me
doun—
See, see where Christ's blood streames in the firmament
It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree
Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart
That holds the fires of the world,—dark-smirched with
pain
As Caesar's laurel crown

Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man
Was once a child who among beasts has lain—
"Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood,
for thee"

EDITH SITWELL

FIFE TUNE

(6/8) for Sixth Platoon, 308th I T C

ONE morning in spring
We marched from Devizes
All shapes and all sizes
Like beads on a string,
But yet with a swing
We trod the bluemetal
And full of high fettle
We started to sing

She ran down the stair
A twelve-year-old darling
And laughing and calling
She tossed her bright hair,
Then silent to stare
At the men flowing past her—
There were all she could master
Adoring her there

It's seldom I'll see
A sweeter or prettier,
I doubt we'll forget her
In two years or three,
And lucky he'll be
She takes for a lover
While we are far over
The treacherous sea

JOHN MANIFOLD

FABLE

O THE vines were golden, the birds were loud,
The orchard showered, the honey flowed,
The Venice glasses were full of wine,
The women were geese and the men were swine

And the lamp then flickered over the door,
And the gulls went screaming along the shore,
And the wolf crept down from the milkwhite hill
And the stars lay bright in the frozen well

O my world, O what have you done to me?
For my love has turned to a laurel tree,
The axe hangs trembling over the Isles,
The Lyre has loosened her flaming miles,

And the door is locked and the key is lost
And the gulls lie stiffening in the frost
And the rippled snow is tracked with blood
And my love lies cold in the burning wood

FREDERIC PROKOSCH

IN DISTRUST OF MERITS

STRENGTHENED to live, strengthened to die for
medals and positioned victories?
They're fighting, fighting, fighting the blind
man who thinks he sees,—
who cannot see that the enslaver is
enslaved, the hater, harmed O shining O
firm star, O tumultuous
ocean lashed till small things go

as they will, the mountainous
wave makes us who look, know

.

depth Lost at sea before they fought! O
star of David, star of Bethlehem,
O black imperial lion
of the Lord—emblem
of a risen world—be joined at last, be
joined There is hate's crown beneath which all is
death, there's love's without which none
is king, the blessed deeds bless
the halo As contagion
of sickness makes sickness,

contagion of trust can make trust They're
fighting in deserts and caves, one by
one, in battalions and squadrons,
they're fighting that I
may yet recover from the disease, *my*
self, some have it lightly, some will die "Man's
wolf to man?" And we devour
ourselves? The enemy could not
have made a greater breach in our
defenses One pilot-

ing a blind man can escape him, but
Job disheartened by false comfort knew,
that nothing is so defeating
as a blind man who
can see O alive who are dead, who are
proud not to see, O small dust of the earth
that walks so arrogantly,
trust begets power and faith is
an affectionate thing We
vow, we make this promise

to the fighting—it's a promise—"We'll
never hate black, white, red, yellow, Jew,
Gentile, Untouchable " We are
not competent to
make our vows With set jaw they are fighting,
fighting, fighting,—some we love whom we know,
some we love but know not—that
hearts may feel and not be numb
It cures me, or am I what
I can't believe in? Some

in snow, some on crags, some in quicksands,
little by little, much by much, they
are fighting fighting fighting that where
there was death there may
be life "When a man is prey to anger,
he is moved by outside things, when he holds
his ground in patience patience
patience, that is action or
beauty," the soldier's defense
and hardest armor for

the fight The world's an orphans' home Shall
we never have peace without sorrow?
without pleas of the dying for
help that won't come? O
quiet form upon the dust, I cannot
look and yet I must If these great patient
dyings—all these agonies
and woundbearings and blood shed—
can teach us how to live, these
dyings were not wasted

Hate-hardened heart, O heart of iron,
iron is iron till it is rust

There never was a war that was
not inward, I must
fight till I have conquered in myself what
causes war, but I would not believe it
I inwardly did nothing
O Iscariotlike crime!
Beauty is everlasting
and dust is for a time

MARIANNE MOORE

PROTEUS, OR, THE SHAPES OF CONSCIENCE

THIS is Proteus, a god He comes from the ocean
Sometimes, at hot noon, and crosses the beach
Looking for inland shade If he comes within reach,
As he may, dive at his knees, do not be afraid
To bring him down to the sand with a flying tackle
And bind him, overthrown, with the rude compulsion
Of manacle, shackle, chain And even so,
Ride him hard with your weight Do not let go

This god is worse than sly In your hands he will turn
To utter fire, and roar in your face and eyes,
Or burn, burn like a beast, lion or tiger, bright
And hot and rank, or a lewd and ugly boar,
Or some unshapely horror, moist and brown,
Repulsive pulp to touch, and foul to smell,
Or he may be a lovely river of silver
And blue and green, with delicate wave and ripple
Over the mottled pebbles

Hold him down
Until the miracle do not let him go
The final change you will never understand
You will not know how he ever managed to rise,
Nor how you rose yourself, to find him there,
An upright natural presence, facing you,
As tall as you, in the soft ambrosial air,
Smiling, and looking you straight in the eyes, like a man,
And telling you what it was you wanted to know

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

THE CANDLE INDOORS

SOME candle clear burns somewhere I come by
I muse at how its being puts blissful back
With yellowy moisture mild night's blear-all black,
Or to-fro tender trambeams truckle at the eye
By that window what task what fingers ply,
I plod wondering, a-wanting, just for lack
Of answer the eagerer a-wanting Jessy or Jack
There God to aggrandize, God to glorify —

Come you indoors, come home, your fading fire
Mend first and vital candle in close heart's vault
You there are master, do your own desire,
What hinders? Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault
In a neighbour deft-handed? Are you that liar
And cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt?

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

AMONG SCHOOL-CHILDREN

I WALK through the long schoolroom questioning,
A kind old nun in a white hood replies,
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and history,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way—the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man

I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy—
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age—
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage—
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild
She stands before me as a living child

Her present image floats into the mind—
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?

And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once—enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things,
Soldier Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings,
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose
And yet they too break hearts—O Presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolize—
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise,

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,

Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil
O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

W B YEATS

THOU ART INDEED JUST, LORD, IF I CONTEND

*Justus quidem tu es, Domine, si disputem tecum
verumtamen iusta loquar ad te Quare via impiorum
prosperatur? etc*

THOU art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee, but, sir, so what I plead is just
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them, birds build—but not I build, no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE EMOTION OF FICTION

READING a book of tales
Which has stirred my imagination,
I have put down the book
And stared at the congregation
Of shadows and hollows which then
Make up the world, and found
Such meaning in meaningless things—
The neutral, patterned ground,
The figures on the sky—
As made me ache to tell
The single secret that runs,
Like a tendon, through it all
And I could promise then
An overwhelming word,
A final revelation—
The image of a seabird
With scimitars of wings,
Pathetic feet tucked away,
A fine, ill-omened name,
Sweeping across the grey,
And I knew then the purpose
Of everything, that illusion
That comes in the unexpected
Moment, an aimed explosion
Perhaps the object of art
Is this the communication
Of that which cannot be told
Worse the rich explanation
That there is nothing to tell,
Only the artificial
Plot and ambiguous word,
The forged but sacred missal

Even the word becomes
Merely a path to meaning,
It is the plot that stays
Longest, a model of leaning
Out over raging seas,
As if our ship or longing
Could weather infinite water
Or fatal, ghostly thronging
If one could invent a plot
Whose action was slow as life
But vivid and absorbing,
With a last twist of the knife,
Virtues of furious neatness,
Coincidence, surprise,
The loves of the old or plain
Made plausible as lies
And all to be ideal,
Even the gross and stupid
Details of passion and death
That one can never decide
Whether nothing or everything—
And then ? Would that be more
Precise than this intense
But vague emotion ? Roar,
Lions of living flesh,
On bone-strewed plains ! It is
The winged and semi-human
Monsters of civilized myths
Whose terrible questions, above
Familiar evil or good,
Are unanswerable, but
Whose tongue is understood

ROY FULLER

THE PRAYING MANTIS VISITS A PENTHOUSE

THE praying Mantis with its length of straw
Out of the nowhere's forehead born full armed
Engages the century at my terrace door
Focused at inches the dinosaur insect sends
Broadside of epic stillness at my eye,
Above the deafening projects of the age
My love, who fears the thunder of its poise,
Has seen it and cries out The clouds like curls
Fall in my faith as I seize a stick to stop
This Martian raid distilled to a straw with legs,
To wisps of prowess Bristling with motionlessness
The Mantis prays to the Stick twice armed with Man

I strike, the stick whistles, shearing off two legs
Which run off by themselves beneath some boards
The Mantis spreads out tints of batlike wing,
The many colored pennants of its blood,
And hugs my weapon, the frantic greens come out,
The reds and yellows blurt out from the straw,
All sinews doubtless screaming insect death
Against the railing's edge I knock the stick
Sending that gay mad body into the gulf
Such noisy trappings in defeat wake doubts
I search my mind for possible wounds and feel
The victim's body heavy on the victor's heart

OSCAR WILLIAMS

A DIALOGUE OF SELF AND SOUL

I

MY SOUL I summon to the winding ancient stair,
Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,
Upon the breathless starlit air,
Upon the star that marks the hidden pole,
Fix every wandering thought upon
That quarter where all thought is done
Who can distinguish darkness from the soul?

MY SELF The consecrated blade upon my knees
Is Sato's ancient blade, still as it was,
Still razor-keen, still like a looking-glass
Unspotted by the centuries,
That flowering, silken, old embroidery, torn
From some court-lady's dress and round
The wooden scabbard bound and wound,
Can, tattered, still protect, faded adorn

MY SOUL Why should the imagination of a man
Long past his prime remember things that are
Emblematical of love and war?
Think of ancestral night that can,
If but imagination scorn the earth
And intellect its wandering
To this and that and t'other thing,
Deliver from the crime of death and birth

MY SELF Montashigi, third of his family, fashioned it
Five hundred years ago, about it lie

Flowers from I know not what embroidery—
Heart's purple—and all these I set
For emblems of the day against the tower
Emblematical of the night,
And claim as by a soldier's right
A charter to commit the crime once more

MY SOUL Such fullness in that quarter overflows
And falls into the basin of the mind
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
For intellect no longer knows
Is from the Ought, or Knower from the Known—
That is to say, ascends to Heaven,
Only the dead can be forgiven,
But when I think of that my tongue's a stone

II

MY SELF A living man is blind and drinks his drop
What matter if the ditches are impure ?
What matter if I live it all once more ?
Endure that toil of growing up,
The ignominy of boyhood, the distress
Of boyhood changing into man,
The unfinished man and his pain
Brought face to face, with his own clumsiness,

The finished man among his enemies ?—
How in the name of Heaven can he escape
That defiling and disfigured shape
The mirror of malicious eyes
Casts upon his eyes until at last
He thinks that shape must be his shape ?
And what's the good of an escape
If honour find him in the wintry blast ?

I am content to live it all again
And yet again, if it be life to pitch
Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
A blind man battering blind men,
Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
The folly that man does
Or must suffer, if he woos
A proud woman not kindred of his soul

I am content to follow to its source,
Every event in action or in thought,
Measure the lot, forgive myself the lot!
When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest

W B YEATS

HIS SHIELD

THE pin-swine or spine-swine
(the edgahog miscalled hedgehog) with
all his edges out,
echidna and echinoderm in distressed-
pincushion thorn-fur coats,
the spiny pig or porcupine,
the rhino with horned snout,—
everything is battle-dressed

Pig-fur won't do, I'll wrap
myself in salamander-skin

like Presbyter John
A lizard in the midst of flames, a firebrand
that is life, asbestos-
 eyed asbestos-eared with tattooed nap
 and permanent pig on
the instep, he can withstand

fire and won't drown In his
unconquerable country of
 unpompous gusto,
gold was so common none considered it, greed
and flattery were
 unknown Though rubies large as tennis-
 balls conjoined in streams so
that the mountain seemed to bleed,

the inextinguishable
salamander styled himself but
 presbyter His shield
was his humility In Carpasian
linen coat, flanked by his
 household lion-cubs and sable
 retinue, he revealed
a formula safer than

an armorer's the power of relinquishing
what one would keep, that is freedom
 Become dinosaur-
skulled, quilled or salamander-wooled, more ironshod
and javelin-dressed than
 a hedgehog battalion of steel, but be
 dull Don't be envied or
armed with a measuring-rod

MARIANNE MOORE

FOREST

THERE is the star bloom of the moss
And the hairy chunks of light between the conifers,
There are alleys of light as well where the green leads to
a funeral
Down the false floor of needles
There are rocks and boulders that jut, saw-toothed and
urine-yellow
Other stones in a field look in the distance like sheep
grazing,
Grey trunk and trunklike legs and lowered head
There are short-stemmed forests so close to the ground
You would pity a dog lost there in the spore-budding
Blackness where the sun has never struck down
There are dying ferns that glow like a goldmine
And weeds and sumac extend the Sodom of color
Among the divisions of stone and the fissures of branch
Lurk the abashed resentments of the ego

Do not say this is pleasurable!
Bats, skittering on wires over the lake,
And the bug on the water bristling in light as he
measures forward his leaps,
The hills holding back the sun by their notched edges
(What volcanoes lie on the other side
Of heat, light, burning up even the angels)
And the mirrors of forests and hills drawing nearer
Till the lake is all forests and hills made double,
Do not say this is kindly, convenient,
Warms the hands, crosses the senses with promise,
Harries our fear
Uneasy, we bellow back at the tree frogs

And, night approaching like the entrance of a tunnel,
We would turn back and cannot, we
Surprise our natures, the woods lock us up
In the secret crimes of our intent

JEAN GARRIGUE

A DOG NAMED EGO

A DOG named Ego, the snowflakes as kisses
Fluttered, ran, came with me in December,
Snuffing the chill air, changing, and halting,
There where I walked toward seven o'clock,
Snuffed at some interests hidden and open,
Whirled, descending, and stood still, attentive,
Seeking their peace, the stranger, unknown,
With me, near me, kissed me, touched my wound,
My simple face, obsessed and pleasure bound

"Not free, no liberty, rock that you carry,"
So spoke Ego in his cracked and harsh voice,
While snowflakes kissed me and satisfied minutes,
Falling from some place half believed and unknown,
"You will not be free, nor ever alone,"
So spoke Ego, "Mine is the kingdom,
Dynasty's bone you will not be free,
Go, choose, run, you will not be alone"

"Come, come, come," sang the whirling snowflakes,
Evading the dog who barked at their smallness,
"Come!" sang the snowflakes, "Come here! and here!"
How soon at the sidewalk, melted, and done,
One kissed me, two kissed me! So many died!

While Ego barked at them, swallowed their touch,
Ran this way! And that way! While they slipped to the
ground,
Leading him further and farther away,
While night collapsed amid the falling,
And left me no recourse, far from my home,
And left me no recourse, far from my home

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE HEAVY BEAR

"the witness of the body"

—WHITEHEAD

THE heavy bear who goes with me,
A manifold honey to smear his face,
Clumsy and lumbering here and there,
The central ton of every place,
The hungry beating brutish one
In love with candy, anger, and sleep,
Crazy factotum, dishevelling all,
Climbs the building, kicks the football,
Boxes his brother in the hate-ridden city

Breathing at my side, that heavy animal,
That heavy bear who sleeps with me,
Howls in his sleep for a world of sugar,
A sweetness intimate as the water's clasp,
Howls in his sleep because the tight-rope
Trembles and shows the darkness beneath
—The strutting show-off is terrified,
Dressed in his dress-suit, bulging his pants,

Trembles to think that his quivering meat
Must finally wince to nothing at all

That inescapable animal walks with me,
Has followed me since the black womb held,
Moves where I move, distorting my gesture,
A caricature, a swollen shadow,
A stupid clown of the spirit's motive,
Perplexes and affronts with his own darkness,
The secret life of belly and bone,
Opaque, too near, my private, yet unknown,
Stretches to embrace the very dear
With whom I would walk without him near,
Touches her grossly, although a word
Would bare my heart and make me clear,
Stumbles, flounders, and strives to be fed
Dragging me with him in his mouthing care,
Amid the hundred million of his kind,
The scrimmage of appetite everywhere

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

SNAKE

A SNAKE came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great
carob-tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for
the trough before me

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the
gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down,
over the edge of the stone trough
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a
small clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack
long body,
Silently

Someone was before me at my water-trough,
And I, like a second comer, waiting

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,
And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and
mused a moment,
And stooped and drank a little more,
Being earth brown, earth golden from the burning burn-
ing bowels of the earth
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking

The voice of my education said to me
He must be killed,
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the
gold are venomous

And voices in me said, If you were a man
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish
him off

But I must confess how I liked him,
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to
drink at my water-trough

And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,
Into the burning bowels of this earth

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him ?
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him ?
Was it humility, to feel so honoured ?
I felt so honoured

And yet those voices
If you were not afraid, you would kill him !

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,
But even so, honoured still more
That he should seek my hospitality
From out the dark door of the secret earth

He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue like a forked light on the air,
 so black,
Seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,
And slowly turned his head,
And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders,
 and entered farther,
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing
 into that horrid black hole,
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly draw-
 ing himself after,
Overcame me now his back was turned

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter

I think it did not hit him
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste,
Writhed like lightning, and was gone
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination

And immediately I regretted it
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education

And I thought of the albatross,
And I wished he would come back, my snake

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
Of life
And I have something to expiate,
A pettiness

D H LAWRENCE

CANZONE

WHEN shall we learn, what should be clear as day,
We cannot choose what we are free to love?
Although the mouse we banished yesterday
Is an enraged rhinoceros to-day,
Our value is more threatened than we know
Shabby objections to our present day
Go snooping round its outskirts, night and day
Faces, orations, battles, bait our will
As questionable forms and noises will,
Whole phyla of resentments every day
Give status to the wild men of the world
Who rule the absent-minded and this world

We are created from and with the world
To suffer with and from it day by day
Whether we meet in a majestic world
Of solid measurements or a dream world
Of swans and gold, we are required to love
All homeless objects that require a world
Our claim to own our bodies and our world
Is our catastrophe What can we know
But panic and caprice until we know
Our dreadful appetite demands a world
Whose order, origin, and purpose will
Be fluent satisfaction of our will?

Drift, Autumn, drift, fall, colours, where you will
Bald melancholia minces through the world
Regret, cold oceans, the lymphatic will
Caught in reflection on the right to will
While violent dogs excite their dying day

To bacchic fury, snarl, though, as they will,
Their teeth are not a triumph for the will
But utter hesitation What we love
Ourselves for is our power not to love,
To shrink to nothing or explode at will,
To ruin and remember that we know
What ruins and hyaenas cannot know

If in this dark now I less often know
That spiral staircase where the haunted will
Hunts for its stolen luggage, who should know
Better than you, beloved, how I know
What gives security to any world,
Or in whose mirror I begin to know
The chaos of the heart as merchants know
Their coins and cities, genius its own day?
For through our lively traffic all the day,
In my own person I am forced to know
How much must be forgotten out of love,
How much must be forgiven, even love

Dear flesh, dear mind, dear spirit, O dear love,
In the depths of myself blind monsters know
Your presence and are angry, dreading Love
That asks its images for more than love,
The hot rampageous horses of my will,
Catching the scent of Heaven, whinny Love
Gives no excuse to evil done for love,
Neither in you, nor me, nor armies, nor the world
Of words and wheels, nor any other world
Dear fellow-creature, praise our God of Love
That we are so admonished, that no day
Of conscious trial be a wasted day

Or else we make a scarecrow of the day,
Loose ends and jumble of our common world,
And stuff and nonsense of our own free will,
Or else our changing flesh may never know
There must be sorrow if there can be love

W H ALDEN

WITH GOD CONVERSING

RED paths that wander through the gray, and cells
Of strangeness, rutted mouldings in the brain,
Untempered fevers heated by old kills,
By the pampered word, by the pat printed rune,
Unbalanced coil under glaucous blooms of thought,
A turning mind, unmitigated thinking that
Feeds human hunger and eats us alive
While cringing to the death, expecting love,—
Such make the self we are And do you make it?
And practice on us? For we cannot take it

Listen Grow mild before the flicking lash
Seems welded to your hand, self-wounder
What are we, cry we, while our pain leaps lush,
Too jungle thick the jungle where we wander,
No seeded faith before, nor after, miracle,
Of bidden faith in things unseen, no particle
For we think only through our troubled selves,
We note the worm that in the apple delves,
See gibbous moons and spots upon the sun,
Speak gibberish, and keep the poor in sin

Plus birth and death must war-lash winnow
While every pod-burst leaf of May sucks life?
Because we think shall we be less than minnow,
Cat, carrot, rat, bat and such from sense aloof?
What doorless maze is this we wander through
With fuming souls parched of our morning dew?
Reason confounds as it presents to NAUGHT
Earth worn, man moving into self-made night
Reason-begotten science sets war's pace
And, civil-mouthed, makes civilization pass

Created in your image, made up of words,
Till words reduce you to a zero-o,
We, then, reflecting you, are less than birds,
Bugs, or empty dugs, still less than minus no
There must be something wrong with being wise—
Talking we go, wondering and wandering with woes,
Big thoughts have got us, hence we organize,
Govern our heroes with unmeant yeas and nays,
And breathe in dungeons of our nervous mesh
An air too blank to snare meandering flesh

Night melting dawn shall turn the renewed sky,
Aurora Borealis and Australis
Fanfaring leap the poles, the moon fall by,
But if our science does not quickly fail us
How long for us will space blue light the dun
Of populaces, while wonderers eye the sun?
The gloomy silhouettes of wings we forged
With reason reasonless, are now enlarged,
The falsified subconscious, beast a-woken?
We-you? Post-suicides, shall we awaken?

GENE DERWOOD

DOG, DOG IN MY MANGER

DOG, dog in my manger, drag at my heathen
Heart where the swearing smoke of Love
Goes up as I give everything to the blaze
Drag at my fires, dog, drag at my altars
Where Aztec I over my tabernacle raise
The Absalom assassination I my murder

Dog, drag off the gifts too much I load
My life as wishing tree too heavy with
And, dog, guide you my stray down quiet roads
Where peace is—be my engine of myth
That, dog, so drags me down my time
Sooner I shall rest from my overload

Dog, is my shake when I come from water,
The cataract of my days, as red as danger?
O my joy has jaws that seize in fangs
The gift and hand of love always I sought for
They come to me with kingdoms of my paucity—
Dog, why is my tooth red with their charity?

Mourn, dog, mourn over me where I lie
Not dead but spinning on the pinpoint hazard,
The fiftieth angel Bay, bay in the blizzard
That brings a tear to my snowman's eye
And buries us all in what we most treasured
Dog, why do we die so often before we die?

Dog, good dog, trick do and make me take
Calmly the consciousness of the crime
Born in the blood simply because we are here

Your father burns for his father's sake,
So will a son burn in a further time
Under the bush of joy you planted here

Dog, dog, your bone I am, who tear my life
Tatterdemalion from me From you I have no peace,
No life at all unless you break my bone,
No bed unless I sleep upon my grief
That without you we are too much alone,
No peace until no peace is a happy home
O dog my god, how can I cease to praise!

GEORGE BARKER

HOC EST CORPUS

I WHO am nothing and this tissue
steer, find in my servant still my maker,
rule and obey, as flame to candle mated
whom bone has conjured, Banquo shall the Bard
command, the marble rule Pygmalion
Did this tower build me then who am its garrison?

Strange that in me the shadow
moving the substance speaks strange that such air
pulls the blue sinew, whom the blood maintains
whom the heart's coming slight defection
shall spill, speaks now and holds
time like a permanent stone, its cold weight judging

ALEX COMFORT

THE FINAL INCH

'Twas like a maelstrom, with a notch
That nearer every day
Kept narrowing its boiling wheel
Until the agony

Toyed coolly with the final inch
Of your delirious hem,
And you dropped, lost, when something broke
And let you from a dream

As if a goblin with a gauge
Kept measuring the hours,
Until you felt your second weigh
Helpless in his paws,

And not a sinew, stirred, could help,
And sense was setting numb,
When God remembered, and the fiend
Let go then, overcome,

As if your sentence stood pronounced,
And you were frozen led
From dungeon's luxury of doubt
To gibbets and the dead,

And when the film had stitched your eyes,
A creature gasped "Reprieve!"
Which anguish was the utterest then,
To perish, or to live?

EMILY DICKINSON

THE ATOLL IN THE MIND

Out of what calms and pools the cool shell grows
dumb teeth under clear waters, where no currents
fracture the coral's porous horn

Grows up the mind's stone tree, the honeycomb,
the plump brain coral breaking the pool's mirror,
the ebony antler, the cold sugared fan

All these strange trees stand upward through the water,
the mind's grey candied points tend to the surface,
the greater part is out of sight below

But when on the island's whaleback spring green blades
new land over water wavers, birds bring seeds
and tides plant slender trunks by the lagoon

I find the image of the mind's two trees, cast downward,
one tilting leaves to catch the sun's bright pennies,
one dark as water, rooted among the bones

ALEX COMFORT

SUCCESS IS COUNTED SWEETEST

SUCCESS is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need

Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag today
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,

As he defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear

EMILY DICKINSON

THE RIDER VICTORY

THE rider victory reins his horse
Midway across the empty bridge
As if head-tall he had met a wall
Yet there was nothing there at all,
No bodiless barrier, ghostly ridge
To check the charger in his course
So suddenly, you'd think he'd fall

Suspended, steed and rider stare,
Leaping on air and legendary
In front the waiting kingdom lies,
The bridge and all the roads are free
But halted in implacable air
Rider and horse with stony eyes
Uprear their motionless statuary

EDWIN MUIR

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection,
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death,
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories grow
From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
Dead, but feed the grass row after rich row
Think of the autumns that have come and gone!—
Ambitious November with the humors of the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you, like them, to stone,
Transforms the heaving air
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly
Heaving, turning like the blind crab

Dazed by the wind, only the wind
The leaves flying, plunge

You know who have waited by the wall
The twilight certainty of an animal,

Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know—the immitigable pines, the smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call you know the rage,
The cold pool left by the mounting flood,
Of muted Zeno and Parmenides
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision—
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the wall

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past,
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth—they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall, and the sunken fields of hemp,
Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run
Lost in that orient of the thick and fast
You will curse the setting sun

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm

You hear the shout, the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in time

The hound bitch
Toothless and dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean,
Whose verdurous anonymity will grow?

The ragged arms, the ragged heads and eyes
Lost in these acres of the insane green?
The gray lean spiders come, they come and go,
In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's tight
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry

We shall say only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

We shall say only the leaves whispering
In the improbable mist of nightfall
That flies on multiple wing
Night is the beginning and the end
And in between the ends of distraction
Waits mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For his own image in a jungle pool, his victim

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now

The shut gate and the decomposing wall
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush—
Sentinel of the grave who counts us all!

ALLEN TATE

1926-1936

THE THRUSH

(*To N A W*)

I PLUCKED a throistle from the throat of God,
Into her teeming freckled breast I sent
Wanton destruction
Boldly she sat upon the bough,
Outright she sung her song of joy
Constant and careless

Sadist upon that holy spot,
I raised my gun—and shot

Plucking immortal chords from life,
I stopped her song and stole
Her immortality
Profiled she was against the sky,
A taste of world's reality
Amongst chaos, man's strategy

Lord, much loved you her full-throated song
Lord, pray forgive me—I did wrong

TIMOTHY CORSELLIS

ELEGY

*On Gordon Barber, Lamentably Drowned in his
Eighteenth Year*

WHEN in the mirror of a permanent tear
Over the iris of your mother's eye
I beheld the dark tremor of your face, austere
With space of death, spun too benign for youth,
Icicle of the past to pierce her living sigh—
I saw you wish the last kiss of mother's mouth,
Who took the salted waters rather in the suck
Of seas, sighing yourself to fill and drench
With water the plum-rich glory of your breast
Where beat the heart escaping from war's luck

Gordon, I mourn your wrist, your running foot,
Your curious brows, your thigh, your unborn daughters,
Yet mourn more deep the drought-caught war dry boy
Who goes, a killer, to join you in your sleep
And envy you what made you blench
Taking your purple back to drought-less waters
What choke of terror filled you in the wet
What fierce surprise caught you when play turned fate
And all the rains you loved became your net,
Formlessly yielding, yet stronger than your breath?
Then did you dream of mother or hopes hatched
When the cold cramp held you from nape to foot
And time dissolved, promise dissolved, in Death?
Did you cry 'cruel' to all the hands that stretched
Not near, but played afar, when you sank down
Your sponge of lungs hurt to the quick
Till you had left the quick to join the dead,

Whom, now, your mother mourns grief-sick ?
You were too young to drown

Never will you take bride to happy bed,
Who lay awash in water yet no laving
Needed, so pure so young for sudden leaving

Gone, gone is Gordon, tall and brilliant lad
Whose mind was science Now hollow his skull
A noble sculpture, is but sunken bone,
His cells from water come by water laid
Grave-deep, to water gone
Lost, lost the hope he had
Washer to a cipher his splendour and his skill

But Gordon's gone, it's other boys who live afraid

Two years, and lads have grown to hold a gun
In dust must splendid lads go down and choke,
Red dry their hands and dry their one day's sun
From which they earthward fall to fiery tomb
Bomb-weighted, from bloodying children's hair

Never a boy but takes as cross Cain's crime
And goes to death by making death, to pass
Death's gate distorted with the dried brown grime—
Better the watery death than death by air
Or death by sand
Where fall hard fish of fear
Loud in unwetted dust

Spun on a lucky wave, O early boy!
Now ocean's fish you are
As heretofore

Perhaps you had sweet mercy's tenderness
To win so soon largesse of choice
That you, by grace, went gayly to the wave
And all our mourning should be to rejoice

GENE DERWOOD

1942

EASTER, 1916

I HAVE met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn
All changed, changed utterly
A terrible beauty is born

That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill

What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse,
This other his helper and friend
Was coming into his force,
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song,
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy,
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly
A terrible beauty is born

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream
The horse that comes from the road,
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change,
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute,
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it,
The long-legged moor-hens dive,

And hens to moor-cocks call,
Minute by minute they live
The stone's in the midst of all

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death,
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said
We know their dream, enough
To know they dreamed and are dead,
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly
A terrible beauty is born

W B YEATS

September 25, 1916

FELIX RANDAL

FELIX RANDAL the farrier, O he is dead then ? my duty all ended,

Who have watched his mold of man, big-boned and hardy-handsome

Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it and some

Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended ?

Sickness broke him Impatient he cursed at first, but mended

Being anointed and all, though a heavenlier heart began some

Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom

Tendered to him Ah, well, God rest him all road ever he offended !

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,

Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal,

How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,

When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,

Didst fettle for the great gray drayhorse his bright and battering sandal !

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

MEMORIAL

*(For two young seamen lost overboard in a storm in
Mid-Pacific, January 1940)*

I

THE seagull, spreadeagled, splayed on the wind,
Span backwards shrieking, belly facing upward,
Fled backwards with a gimlet in its heart
To see the two youths swimming hand in hand
Through green eternity O swept overboard
Not could the thirty-foot jaws them part,
On the flouncing skirts that swept them over
Separate what death pronounced was love
I saw them, the hand flapping like a flag,
And another like a dolphin with a child
Supporting him Was I the shape of Jesus
When to me hopeward their eyeballs swivelled,
Saw I was standing in the posture of vague
Horror, oh paralyzed with mere pity's peace?

II

From thorax of storms the voices of verbs
Shall call to me without sound, like the vowel
Round which cyclones rage, to nurse my nerve,
My shaken, my broken, my oh I shall grovel
Heart I taste sea swilling in my bowels,
As now I sit shivering in the swing of waves
Life a face in a bubble As the hull heaves
I and my mind go walking over hell
The greedy bitch with sailors in her guts,
Green as a dream and formidable as God,
Spitting at stars, gnawing at shores, mad, randy,

Riots with us on her abdomen and puts
Eternity in our cabins, pitches our pod
To the mouth of the death for which no one is ready

III

At midday they looked up and saw their death
Standing up overhead as loud as thunder
As white as angels and formidable as God
Then, then the shock, the last gasp of breath,
As grazing the bulwarks they swept over and under,
All the green arms around them that load
Their eyes, their ears, their stomachs with eternals,
Whirled away in a white pool to the stern
But the most possible of all miracles
Is that the useful tear that did not fall
From the corner of their eyes, was the prize,
The flowers, the gifts, the crystal sepulcher,
The funeral contribution and memorial,
The perfect and non-existent obsequies

GEORGE BARKER

SONG

(On seeing dead bodies floating off the Cape)

THE first month of his absence
I was numb and sick
And where he'd left his promise
Life did not turn or kick
The seed, the seed of love was sick

The second month my eyes were sunk
In the darkness of despair,

And my bed was like a grave
And his ghost was lying there
And my heart was sick with care

The third month of his going
I thought I heard him say
"Our course deflected slightly
On the thirty-second day—"
The tempest blew his words away

And he was lost among the waves,
His ship rolled helpless in the sea,
The fourth month of his voyage
He shouted grievously
"Beloved, do not think of me "

The flying fish like kingfishers
Skim the sea's bewildered crests,
The whales blow steaming fountains,
The seagulls have no nests
Where my lover sways and rests

We never thought to buy and sell
This life that blooms or withers in the leaf,
And I'll not stir, so he sleeps well,
Though cell by cell the coral reef
Builds an eternity of grief

But oh! the drag and dullness of my Self,
The turning seasons wither in my head,
All this slowness, all this hardness,
The nearness that is waiting in my bed,
The gradual self-effacement of the dead

ALUN LEWIS

THE SIRENS

ODYSSEUS heard the sirens, they were singing
Music by Wolf and Weinberger and Morley
About a region where the swans go winging,
Vines are in colour, girls are growing surely

Into nubility, and pylons bringing
Leisure and power to farms that live securely
Without a landlord Still, his eyes were stinging
With salt and seablank, and the ropes hurt sorely

Odysseus saw the sirens, they were charming,
Blonde, with snub breasts and little neat posteriors,
But could not take his mind off the alarming

Weather report, his mutineers in irons,
The radio failing, it was bloody serious
In twenty minutes he forgot the sirens

JOHN MANIFOLD

SPRING 1943

THE skies contain still groves of silver clouds,
The land is low and level, and the buzzards
Rise from a dead and stiff hyena Hazards
Of war and seas divide me from the crowds
Whose actions alone give numbers to the years,

But all my emotions in this savage place
This moment have a pale and hungry face
The vision metropolitan appears
And as I leave the crawling carcass, turning
Into the scrub, I think of rain upon
Factories and banks, the shoulders of a meeting
And thoughts that always crouch in wait come burning—
Slim naked legs of fabulous and fleeting
Dancers, and rooms where everyone has gone

II

Always it is to you my thoughts return
From harrowing speculation on the age,
As though our love and you were fictional
And could not ever burn as cities burn,
Nor die as millions, but upon a page
Rested delightful, moving and immortal
This momentary vision fades Again
You join the sheeted world whose possible death
Is also ours, and our nostalgic breath
Expires across two continents of pain
And clearly I see the organizations of
The oppressed, their dangerous and tiny actions,
The problematic serum of the factions,
In these decayed and crucial times, as love

III

Intelligent, fair and strictly moral as
A heroine of Jane's, here where the hill
Is in another country and shadows pass
Like towns, I think of you so civilized still
And in that chaos of Europe which surrounds
Your little calm I see those leaping, rising,

Almost engendered by the times, the hounds
Of courage, hawks of vision, and the surprising
Gazelles of love And so I run through all
The virtues, and this hopeless, barbarous space,
Which sometimes I think the future's self, can fall
Into its ancient and forgotten place
No, I will not believe that human art
Can fail to make reality its heart

ROY FULLER

IN A TIME OF CRISIS

My love on Wednesday letting fall her body
From upright walking won by weariness,
As on a bed of flesh by ounces counted out,
Softer than snuff or snow came where my body was

So in the aboriginal waterways of the mind,
No words being spoken by a familiar girl,
One may have a clear apprehension of ghostly matters,
Audible, as perhaps in a sea-shell's helix

The Gulf Stream can rub soft music from a pebble
Like quiet rehearsal of the words 'Kneel down',
And cool on the inner corridors of the ear
Can blow on memory and conscience like a sin

The inner man is surely the native of God
And his wife a brilliant novice of nature
The woman walks in the dark like a lantern swung,
A white spark blown between points of pain

We do not speak, embracing with the blood,
The tolling heart marking its measures in darkness
Like the scratch of a match, or the fire-stone
Struck to a spark in the dark by a colder one

So lying close, an enchanted boy may hear
Soon from Tokio the crass drum sounding
From the hero's hearth the merry crotchet of war
Flame shall swallow the lady

Tall men shall come to cool the royal bush,
Over the grey waters the bugler's octaves
Publish aloud a new resurrection of terror
Many shall give suck at the bomb's cold nipple

*Empty your hearts or fill from a purer source
That what is in a man can weep, having eyes
That what is in Truth can speak from the responsible
dust
And O the rose be in the middle of the great world*

LAWRENCE DURRELL

“AND THERE WAS A GREAT CALM”

(On the Signing of the Armistice, Nov 11, 1918)

I

THERE had been years of Passion—scorching, cold,
And much Despair, and Anger heaving high,
Care whitely watching, Sorrows manifold,
Among the young, among the weak and old,
And the pensive Spirit of Pity whispered, “Why?”

II

Men had not paused to answer Foes distraught
 Pierced the thinned peoples in a brute-like blindness,
 Philosophies that sages long had taught,
 And Selflessness, were as an unknown thought,
 And "Hell!" and "Shell!" were yapped at Lovingkind
 ness

III

The feeble folk at home had grown full-used
 To "dug-outs," "snipers," "Huns," from the war-adept
 In the mornings heard, and at evetides perused,
 To day-dreamt men in millions, when they mused—
 To nightmare-men in millions when they slept.

IV

Waking to wish existence timeless, null,
 Sirius they watched above where armies fell,
 He seemed to check his flapping when, in the full
 Of night a boom came thencewise, like the dull
 Plunge of a stone dropped into some deep well

V

So, when old hopes that earth was bettering slowly
 Were dead and damned, there sounded "War is done!"
 One morrow Said the bereft, and meek, and lowly,
 "Will men some day be given to grace? yea, wholly,
 And in good sooth, as our dreams used to run?"

VI

Breathless they paused Out there men raised their
 glance
 To where had stood those poplars lank and lopped,
 As they had raised it through the four years' dance
 Of Death in the now familiar flats of France,
 And murmured, "Strange, this! How? All firing
 stopped?"

VII

Aye, all was hushed The about-to-fire fired not,
 The aimed-at moved away in trance-lipped song
 One checkless regiment slung a clinching shot
 And turned The Spirit of Irony smirked out, "What?
 Spoil peradventures woven of Rage and Wrong?"

VIII

Thenceforth no flying fires inflamed the gray,
 No hurtlings shook the dewdrop from the thorn,
 No moan perplexed the mute bird on the sprav,
 Worn horses mused "We are not whipped to-day",
 No weft-winged engines blurred the moon's thin horn

IX

Calm fell From Heaven distilled a clemency,
 There was peace on earth, and silence in the sky,
 Some could, some could not, shake off misery
 The Sinister Spirit sneered "It had to be!"
 And again the Spirit of Pity whispered, "Why?"

THOMAS HARDY

THE DARK HILLS

DARK hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

THE END OF THE WORLD

QUITE unexpectedly, as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe,
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting

The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off

And there, there overhead, there, there hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

THE CONSPIRATORS

AND if the dead, and the dead
Of spirit now join, and in their horrifying ritual
Proceed till at last with oriental grace
End their concluding dance with the candles guttering,
The cymbals sobbing, the wind harassing the curtains,
The chill from the flood embracing the golden stairway
The scent devoured and the bowls blown clean of incense

Ah then, farewell, sweet northern music,
No longer the flight of the mind across the continents,
The dazzling flight of our words across the tempestuous
Black, or the firelit recital of a distant battle

No All that we loved is lost, if the intricate
Languor of recollected centuries
Descends in its terrible sweetness on our limbs
No shot will echo, no fire, no agonizing
Cry will resound in the city's thickets only,
The ivy falling gently across the bridges,
The larches piercing the roofs, the reclining steeples,
The cellars rich with the agony of the reptiles,
The contemplative worms, the victorious rodents,
And at last, the climax entrancingly serene,
The inconclusive note drowned on the ascendant
Our lovely shapes in marble still shine through the
greenery,
Our exquisite silver bones still glide with the glaciers
That split our familiar hills, still fall with the avalanche
And weaving their vast wing's thunder over the Indies
The birds, the birds, sob for the time of man

FREDERIC PROKOSCH

FIRE AND ICE

SOME say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice

ROBERT FROST

LULLABY

THOUGH the world has slipped and gone,
Sounds my loud discordant cry
Like the steel birds' song on high
'Still one thing is left—the Bone'
Then out danced the Babioun

She sat in the hollow of the sea—
A socket whence the eye's put out—
She sang to the child a lullaby
(The steel birds' nest was thereabout)

Do, do, do, do—
Thy mother's hied to the vaster race
The Pterodactyl made its nest
And laid a steel egg in her breast—

Under the Judas-coloured sun
She'll work no more, nor dance, nor moan,
And I am come to take her place
Do—do

There's nothing left but earth's low bed—
(The Pterodactyl fouls its nest),
But steel wings fan thee to thy rest,
And wingless truth and larvae lie
And eyeless hope and handless fear—
All these for thee as toys are spread
Do—do

Red is the bed of Poland, Spain,
And thy mother's breast, who has grown wise
In that fouled nest If she could rise,
Give birth again,

In wolfish pelt she'd hide thy bones
To shield thee from the world's long cold,
And down on all fours shouldst thou crawl
For thus from no height canst thou fall—
Do, do

She'd give no hands there's naught to hold
And naught to make there's dust to sift,
But no food for the hands to lift
Do, do

Heed my ragged lullaby
Fear not living, fear not chance,
All is equal—blindness, sight,
There is no depth, there is no height
Do, do

The Judas-coloured sun is gone,
And with the Ape thou art alone—
Do,
Do

EDITH SITWELL

Note The phrase 'out-dance the Babioun' occurs in an epigram by Ben Jonson

THE DYKE-BUILDER

ON the seventh day the storm lay dead,
The god who built the dyke strolled out to see
Blind men, blind windows, widows and the daft,
And the cracked shore carpeted with gulls

On the ninth day no sunset red
Daubed the damp stubble peacock blue, bright harmony
Of gold and purple laced the sky, and soft
Ripe as a plum with joy danced the quick girls

But on the eleventh day the dead
Looked from their priest-holes, seeing only sea,
And the green shark-cradles with their swift
Cruel fingers setting the ocean's curls

HENRY TREECE

THE TOO-LATE BORN

WE too, we too, descending once again
The hills of our own land, we too have heard
Far off—Ah, que ce cor a longue haleine—
The horn of Roland in the passages of Spain,

The first, the second blast, the failing third,
And with the third turned back and climbed once more
The steep road southward, and heard faint the sound
Of swords, of horses, the disastrous war,
And crossed the dark defile at last, and found
At Ronçevaux upon the darkening plain
The dead against the dead and on the silent ground
The silent slain—

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

THE EYE

THE Atlantic is a stormy moat, and the Mediterranean,
The blue pool in the old garden,
More than five thousand years has drunk sacrifice
Of ships and blood and shines in the sun, but here the
Pacific.

The ships, planes, wars are perfectly irrelevant
Neither our present blood-feud with the brave dwarfs
Nor any future world-quarrel of westering
And eastering man, the bloody migrations, greed of
power, battle-falcons,
Are a mote of dust in the great scale-pan
Here from this mountain shore, headland^f beyond stormy
headland plunging like dolphins through the gray sea-
smoke

Into pale sea, look west at the hill of water it is half the
planet this dome, this half-globe, this bulging
Eyeball of water, arched over to Asia,
Australia and white Antarctica those are the eyelids
that never close, this is the staring unsleeping
Eye of the earth, and what it watches is not our wars

ROBINSON JEFFERS

NIGHT ON THE DOWNLAND

NIGHT is on the downland, on the lonely moorland,
On the hills where the wind goes over sheep-bitten turf,
Where the bent grass beats upon the unplowed poorland
And the pine-woods roar like the surf

Here the Roman lived on the wind-barren lonely,
Dark now and haunted by the moorland fowl,
None comes here now but the peewit only,
And moth-like death in the owl

Beauty was here on this beetle-droning downland,
The thought of a Caesar in the purple came
From the palace by the Tiber in the Roman townland
To this wind-swept hill with no name

Lonely Beauty came here and was here in sadness,
Brave as a thought on the frontier of the mind,
In the camp of the wild upon the march of madness,
The bright-eyed Queen of the Blind

Now where Beauty was are the wind-withered gorses,
Moaning like old men in the hill-wind's blast,
The flying sky is dark with running horses,
And the night is full of the past

JOHN MASEFIELD

CONSIDER THESE, FOR WE HAVE CONDEMNED THEM

CONSIDER these, for we have condemned them;
Leaders to no sure land, guides their bearings lost
Or in league with robbers have reversed the signposts,

Disrespectful to ancestors, irresponsible to heirs
Born barren, a freak growth, root in rubble,
Fruitlessly blossoming, whose foliage suffocates,
Their sap is sluggish, they reject the sun

The man with his tongue in his cheek, the woman
With her heart in the wrong place, unhandsome, un-
wholesome,

Have exposed the new-born to worse than weather,
Exiled the honest and sacked the seer
These drowned the farms to form a pleasure-lake,
In time of drought they drain the reservoir
Through private pipes for baths and sprinklers

Getters not begetters, gainers not beginners,
Whiners, no winners, no triers, betrayers,
Who steer by no star, whose moon means nothing
Daily denying, unable to dig
At bay in villas from blood relations,
Counters of spoons and content with cushions
They pray for peace, they hand down disaster

They that take the bribe shall perish by the bribe,
Drying of dry rot, ending in asylums,
A curse to children, a charge on the state
But still their fears and frenzies infect us,
Drug nor isolation will cure this cancer
It is now or never, the hour of the knife,
The break with the past, the major operation

C DAY LEWIS

THE CONFLICT

I SANG as one
Who on the tilting deck sings
To keep their courage up, though the wave hangs
That shall cut off their sun

And as the storm-cocks sing
Flinging their natural answer in the wind's teeth,
And care not if it is waste of breath
Or birth-carol of spring

As the ocean-flyer clings
To height, to the last drop of spirit driving on,
And work for wings
While yet ahead is land to be won

Singing I was at peace,
Above the clouds, outside the ring,
For sorrow finds a swift release in song
And pride its poise

Yet living here,
As one between two massing powers I live
Whom neutrality cannot save
Nor occupation cheer

None such shall be left alive
The innocent wing is soon shot down
And private stars fade in the blood-red dawn
Where two worlds strive

The red advance of life
Contracts pride, calls out the common blood,

Beats song into a single blade,
Makes a depth-charge of grief

Move then with new desires,
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live
Between two fires

C DAY LEWIS

AMONG THESE TURF-STACKS

AMONG these turf-stacks graze no iron horses
Such as stalk such as champ in towns and the soul of
crowds,

Here is no mass-production of neat thoughts,
No canvas shrouds for the mind nor any black hearses
The peasant shambles on his boots like hooves
Without thinking at all or wanting to run in grooves

But those who lack the peasant's conspirators
The tawny mountain, the unregarded buttress,
Will feel the need of a fortress against ideas and against
the

Shuddering insidious shock of the theory-vendors
The little sardine men crammed in a monster toy
Who tilt their aggregate beast against our crumbling
Troy

For we are obsolete who like the lesser things,
Who play in corners with looking-glasses and beads,
It is better we should go quickly, go into Asia
Or any other tunnel where the world recedes,
Or turn blind wantons like the gulls who scream
And rip the edge off any ideal or dream

LOUIS MACNEICE

REFLECTIONS IN BED

THAT time of revolution being come
At which the Fortunate Islands should be joined
Put down the book consider, consider always
The time of year, the state of health, the weather
The month, June Heart, rapid and irregular
The day, fine on Richmond river-bank
Talked to two girls Later read Hardy
Went to the cinema prepared for death
These are the effects of a revolution
These are the sophustries of revolution

The alert man lolls in bed waiting for bombs
Cats and trains cry in the night There are
More things in heaven and earth than we can hold
The trams run away The trains run away Their thunder
Making a separate voice And if in bed
Another body moves

Another hand and voice

Under the hard the velvet face of love,
A voice as warm and tender as a wound

Unripe for revolution or for death

JULIAN SYMONS

THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME

MORE beautiful and soft than any moth
With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path
Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines

Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall
To point the wind Gently, broadly, she falls,
Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air

Lulled by descent, the travellers across the sea
And across feminine land indulging its easy limbs
In miles of softness, now let their eyes trained by
watching
Penetrate through dusk the outskirts of this town
Here where industry shows a fraying edge
Here they may see what is being done

Beyond the winking masthead light
And the landing-ground, they observe the outposts
Of work chimneys like lank black fingers
Or figures frightening and mad and squat buildings
With their strange air behind trees, like women's faces
Shattered by grief Here where few houses
Moan with faint light behind their blinds
They remark the unhomely sense of complaint, like a dog
Shut out and shivering at the foreign moon

In the last sweep of love, they pass over fields
Behind the aerodrome, where boys play all day
Hacking dead grass whose cries, like wild birds,
Settle upon the nearest roofs
But soon are hid under the loud city

Then, as they land, they hear the tolling bell
Reaching across the landscape of hysteria
To where, larger than all the charcoaled batteries
And imaged towers against that dying sky,
Religion stands, the church blocking the sun

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE EXPRESS

AFTER the first powerful plain manifesto
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
The gasworks and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery
Beyond the town there lies the open country
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts
And always light, aerial, underneath
Goes the elate meter of her wheels
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines
She plunges new eras of wild happiness
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves
And parallels clean like the steel of guns
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night
Where only a low streamline brightness
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white
Ah, like a comet through flames she moves entranced
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal

STEPHEN SPENDER

LAPIS LAZULI

(For Harry Clifton)

I HAVE heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow,
Of poets that are always gay,
For everybody knows or else should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out,
Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
Until the town lie beaten flat
All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia,
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,
If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay,
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread
All men have aimed at, found and lost,
Black out, Heaven blazing into the head
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce

On their own feet they came, or on shipboard,
Camel-back, horse-back, ass-back, mule-back,
Old civilizations put to the sword
Then they and their wisdom went to rack
No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze,

Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea-winds swept the corner, stands,
His long lamp-chimney shaped like the stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day,
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A symbol of longevity,
The third, doubtless a serving-man,
Carries a musical instrument

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch
Sweetens the little half-way house
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there,
There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare
One asks for mournful melodies,
Accomplished fingers begin to play
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay

W B YEATS

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

JUST as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music too

Music is feeling then, not sound,
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their being throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna

II

In the green water, clear and warm
Susanna lay
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings
She sighed
For so much melody

Upon the bank she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain

Anon their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame

And then the simpering Byzantines,
Fled, with a noise like tambourines

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
 The fitful tracing of a portal,
 But in the flesh it is immortal

The body dies, the body's beauty lives
 So evenings die, in their green going,
 A wave, interminably flowing

So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
 The cowl of Winter, done repenting
 So maidens die to the auroral
 Celebration of a maiden's choral

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
 Of those white elders, but, escaping,
 Left only Death's ironic scraping
 Now in its immortality, it plays
 On the clear viol of her memory,
 And makes a constant sacrament of praise

WALLACE STEVEN

POETRY

I, too, dislike it there are things that are important
 beyond all this fiddle
 Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one
 discovers in
 it after all, a place for the genuine
 Hands that can grasp, eyes
 that can dilate, hair that can rise
 if it must, these things are important not because

high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but
because they are
useful When they become so derivative as to become
unintelligible,
the same thing may be said for all of us, that we
do not admire what
we cannot understand the bat
holding on upside down or in quest of something
to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tire-
less wolf under
a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a
horse that feels a flea, the base-
ball fan, the statistician—
nor is it valid
to discriminate against 'business documents and
school-books', all these phenomena are important One
must make a distinction
however when dragged into prominence by half poets,
the result is not poetry,
nor till the poets among us can be
'literalists of
the imagination'—above
insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in
them, shall we have
it In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness and
that which is on the other hand
genuine, then you are interested in poetry

MARIANNE MOORF

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

And here face down beneath the sun,
And here upon earth's noonward height,
To feel the always coming on,
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow,

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening, strange,
The flooding dark about their knees,
The mountains over Persia change,

And now at Kermanshah the gate,
Dark, empty, and the withered grass,
And through the twilight now the late
Few travellers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone,
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on,

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone,
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown,

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls,

And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls,

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa, the gilded sand,
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land,

Nor now the long light on the sea—

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift, how secretly,
The shadow of the night comes on

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

No room for mourning he's gone out
Into the noisy glen, or stands between the stones
Of the gaunt ridge, or you'll hear his shout
Rolling among the scree, he being a boy again
He'll never fail nor die
And if they laid his bones
In the wet vaults or iron sarcophagi
Of fame, he'd rise at the first summer rain
And stride across the hills to seek
His rest among the broken lands and clouds
He was a stormy day, a granite peak
Spearing the sky, and look, about its base
Words flower like crocuses in the hanging woods,
Blank through the dalehead and the bony face

SIDNEY KEYES

JANUARY 1940

SWIFT had pains in his head
Johnson dying in bed
Tapped the dropsy himself
Blake saw a flea and an elf
Tennyson could hear the shriek
Of a bat Pope was a freak
Emily Dickinson stayed
Indoors for a decade
Water inflated the belly
Of Hart Crane, and of Shelley
Coleridge was a dope
Southwell died on a rope
Byron had a round white foot
Smart and Cowper were put
Away Lawrence was a fidget
Keats was almost a midget
Donne, alive in his shroud,
Shakespeare in the coil of a cloud
Saw death very well as he
Came crab-wise, dark and massy
I envy not only their talents
And fertile lack of balance
But the appearance of choice
In their sad and fatal voice

ROY FULLER

IN MEMORY OF W B YEATS

(d Jan 1939)

I

HE disappeared in the dead of winter
The brooks were frozen, the air-ports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues,
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable
 quays,
By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,
An afternoon of nurses and rumours,
The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed he became his admirers

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living

But in the importance and noise of to-morrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of
the Bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are fairly
accustomed,
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of
his freedom,
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly
unusual

O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day

II

You were silly like us your gift survived it all,
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself, mad Ireland hurt you into poetry
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper, it flows south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in, it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth

III

Earth, receive an honoured guest,
William Yeats is laid to rest
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives,
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet

Time that with this strange excuse
Pardoned Kipling and his views,
And will pardon Paul Claudel,
Pardons him for writing well

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate,

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice,

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress,

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise

W H AUDEN

HART CRANE

He jumped, seeing an island like a hand,
And where he lived, the hands were all unfriendly
The island rose to take him at the end
He saw all things unclearly

Even the sea had become strange to him he entered
To trace the visionary company of love, the voice
He heard an instant in the wind, that said
There was no hand, no choice

And the complete vision of love or the swelling sea
Was what he could never attain, he always wanted
To live near bridges, envied the sailors, free
And happy, never tainted

By the terrible life of the city and the dark failures
That broke his heart He entered the sea, his fall
Made the steamer go round and round like a dog in
circles,
And the island became a wall

JULIAN SYMONS

THE POET AT NIGHT-FALL

I SEE no equivalents
For that which I see,
Among words

And sounds are nowhere repeated,
Vowel for vocal wind
Or shaking leaf

Ah me, beauty does not enclose life,
But blows through it—
Like that idea, the wind,

Which is unseen and useless,
Even superseded upon
The scarred sea,

Which goes and comes
Altering every aspect—
The poplar, the splashing crest—

Altering all, in that moment
When it is not
Because we see it not

But who would hang
Like a wind-bell
On a porch where no wind ever blows?

GLENWAY WESCOTT

I SING AN OLD SONG

I SING an old song, bird on a charcoal bough,
Silver voice on the black black bough, singing,
Rolling heirloom eyes, burning holes in time,
Drenching the flank of nearness with drip-music
The disturbed owner who hides everywhere
Lumbers through the miles of thick indignation
The subconscious parts the nap-gold of afternoon

I sing an old song, bird scything the silence,
Bundling sabres at the cornerstone of sense
Bird, pulley on a hillheap of elves' eyelashes,
Silver piston sunk to a bud on the bough,
Sing, bird, sing, from the black black bough,
Shake the enormous atmosphere from your small fist
Of body, tear the colossal ear of the all around
Hanging loosely, like forest outside a window
Open all the fluteholes of days until the world
Weeps music, and sweats light from every facet,
And tumbles to the smoking knees of its orbit

I sing an old song, bead in the hair of the park,
Bird-knot in the weave of leaves, nugget in sieve
Straining gravel of Utopia to shining beginnings,
Deed, navel of matter, flock of the future,
Knuckle knock on finality, sing, bird, sing
Ride the groundswell of heartbreak, tap thick wrist
Of branch, lump of utterance in the cup of sunlight
Melt into the sweetness of reality, O
Sprinkle effigies on the gauge of stillness,
Aim your gold beak from the nest, from the crook
Of the leafy black arm, toward the poised sun,

Swing girders from your beak through tin pretense
Into the underground room of man, the pallid palace

I sing an old song, bird, toe-hold of song on bough,
Bundle in the bush of radiance birth-cry of poem!

OSCAR WILLIAMS

ARS POETICA

A POEM should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

A poem should be equal to
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean
But be

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

NOT TO FORGET MISS DICKINSON

FLAVOR the speaking of this one,
The jointed quatrains—like a bird's,
The language of Miss Dickinson,
Trapeze performer, dancer of words

See how the sprightly squirrel mind
Resolves to the kernel love so great
The looking on it sets you blind
An instant, as if in sun or hate

Observe the "gypsy face transfigured"
Go through the magic burning act
Of singing in a room beleaguered
Up to its sills by the gnawing fact

MARSHALL SCHACHT

INVOCATION TO THE SOCIAL MUSE

SENORA, it is true the Greeks are dead

It is true also that we here are Americans
That we use the machines that a sight of the god is unusual
That more people have more thoughts that there are

Progress and science and tractors and revolutions and
Marx and the wars more antiseptic and murderous
And music in every home, there is also Hoover

Does the lady suggest we should write it out in The
Word?
Does Madame recall our responsibilities? We are
Whores Fraulein poets Fraulein are persons of

Known vocation following troops they must sleep with
Stragglers from either prince and of both views
The rules permit them to further the business of neither

It is also strictly forbidden to mix in manœuvres
Those that infringe are inflated with praise on the
plazas—
Their bones are resultantly afterwards found under
newspapers

Preferring life with the sons to death with the fathers
We also doubt on the record whether the sons
Will still be shouting around with the old huzzas—

For we hope Lady to live to lie with the youngest
There are only a handful of things a man likes
Generations to generation hungry or

Well fed the earth's one life's
One Mister J P Morgan is not one

There is nothing worse for our trade than to be in style

He that goes naked goes farther at last than another
Wrap the bard in a flag or a school and they'll jummy his
Door down and be thick in his bed—for a month

(Who recalls the address now of the Imagists?)
But the naked man has always his own nakedness
People remember forever his live limbs

They may drive him out of the camps but one will take
him
They may stop his tongue on his teeth with a rope's
argument—
He will lie in a house and be warm when they are
shaking

Beside Tovarich how to embrace an army?
How to take to one's chamber a million souls?
How to conceive in the name of a column of marchers?

The things of the poet are done to a man alone
As the things of love are done—or of death when he
hears the
Step withdraw on the stair and the clock tick only

Neither his class nor his kind nor his trade may come
near him
There where he lies on his left arm and will die

Nor his class nor his kind nor his trade when the blood
is jeering
And his knee's in the soft of the bed where his love lies

I remind you Barinya the life of the poet is hard—
A hardy life with a boot as quick as a fiver

Is it just to demand of us also to bear arms?

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

CASSANDRA

THE mad girl with the staring eyes and long white fingers
Hooked in the stones of the wall,
The storm-wrack hair and the screeching mouth does it
matter, Cassandra,
Whether the people believe
Your bitter fountain? Truly men hate the truth, they'd
liefer
Meet a tiger on the road
Therefore the poets honey their truth with lying, but
religion-
Venders and political men
Pour from the barrel, new lies on the old, and are praised
for kindly
Wisdom Poor bitch be wise
No you'll still mumble in a corner a crust of truth, to
men
And gods disgusting —you and I, Cassandra

ROBINSON JEFFERS

RECUERDO

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon,
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry,
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere,
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry
We hailed, "Good-morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered
head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read,
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares

EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

THE LOOK

STREPHON kissed me in the spring,
Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me
And never kissed at all

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes
Haunts me night and day

SARA TEASDALE

SPRING NIGHT

THE park is filled with night and fog,
The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
Are dim and pearled

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
Gold and gleaming the misty lake,
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—

I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns ?
O beauty, are you not enough ?
Why am I crying after love ?

SARA TEASDALE

ALL IN GREEN WENT MY LOVE RIDING

ALL in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the merry deer ran before

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams
the swift sweet deer
the red rare deer

Four red roebuck at a white water
the cruel bugle sang before

Horn at hip went my love riding
riding the echo down
into the silver dawn

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the level meadows ran before

Softer be they than slippared sleep
the lean lithe deer
the lean lithe deer

Four fleet does at a gold valley
the famished arrow sang before

Bow at belt went my love riding
riding the mountain down
into the silver dawn

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
the sheer peaks ran before

Paler be they than daunting death
the sleek slim deer
the tall tense deer

Four tall stags at a green mountain
the lucky hunter sang before

All in green went my love riding
on a great horse of gold
into the silver dawn

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
my heart fell dead before

E E CUMMINGS

SONG

I CAN'T be talkin' of love, dear,
I can't be talkin' of love
If there be one thing I can't talk of
That one thing do be love

But that's not sayin' that I'm not lovin'—
Still water, you know, runs deep,
An' I do be lovin' so deep, dear,
I be lovin' you in my sleep

But I can't be talkin' of love, dear,
I can't be talkin' of love,
If there be one thing I can't talk of
That one thing do be love

ESTHER MATHEWS

MUSIC I HEARD

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread,
Now that I am without you, all is desolate,
All that was once so beautiful is dead

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass
These things do not remember you, beloved,
And yet your touch upon them will not pass

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes,
And in my heart they will remember always,—
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise

CONRAD AIKEN

PART OF PLENTY

WHEN she carries food to the table and stoops down
—Doing this out of love—and lays soup with its good
Tickling smell, or fry winking from the fire
And I look up, perhaps from a book I am reading
Or other work there is an importance of beauty
Which can't be accounted for by there and then,
And attacks me, but not separately from the welcome
Of the food, or the grace of her arms

When she puts a sheaf of tulips in a jug
And pours in water and presses to one side
The upright stems and leaves that you hear creak,
Or loosens them, or holds them up to show me,
So that I see the tangle of their necks and cups
With the curls of her hair, and the body they are held
Against, and the stalk of the small waist rising
And flowering in the shape of breasts,
Whether in the bringing of the flowers or the food
She offers plenty, and is part of plenty,
And whether I see her stooping, or leaning with the
flowers,
What she does is ages old, and she is not simply,
No, but lovely in that way

BERNARD SPENCER

MENDACITY

TRUTH is love and love is truth,
Either neither in good sooth
Truth is truth and love is love,
Give us grace to taste thereof
But if truth offend my sweet
Then I will have none of it,
And if love offend the other,
Farewell truth, I will not bother

Happy truth when truth accords
With the love in lovers' words!
Harm not truth in any part,
But keep its shadow from love's heart
Men must love, the lovers' lies
Outpall the stars in florid skies,
And none may keep, and few can merit,
The fond joy that they inherit

Who with love at his command
Dare give truth a welcome hand?
Believe it, or believe it not,
'Tis a lore most vainly got
Truth requites no penny-fee,
Niggard's honey feeds no bee,
Ere this trick of truth undo me
Little love, my love, come to me

A E COPPARD

ELEGY BEFORE DEATH

THERE will be rose and rhododendron
When you are dead and under ground,
Still will be heard from white syringas
Heavy with bees, a sunny sound

Still will the tamaracks be raining
After the rain has ceased, and still
Will there be robins in the stubble,
Brown sheep upon the warm green hill

Spring will not ail nor autumn falter,
Nothing will know that you are gone,
Saving alone some sullen plough-land
None but yourself set foot upon,

Saving the may-weed and the pig-weed
Nothing will know that you are dead,—
These, and perhaps a useless wagon
Standing beside some tumbled shed

Oh, there will pass with your great passing
Little of beauty not your own,—
Only the light from common water,
Only the grace from simple stone

EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

OH, SLEEP FOREVER IN THE LATMIAN CAVE

OH, sleep forever in the Latmian cave,
Mortal Endymion, darling of the Moon!
Her silver garments by the senseless wave
Shouldered and dropped and on the shingle strewn
Her fluttering hand against her forehead pressed,
Her scattered looks that trouble all the sky,
Her rapid footsteps running down the west—
Of all her altered state, oblivious lie!
Whom earthen you, by deathless lips adored,
Wild-eyed and stammering to the grasses thrust,
And deep into her crystal body poured
The hot and sorrowful sweetness of the dust
Whereof she wanders mad, being all unfit
For mortal love, that might not die of it

EDNA ST VINCENT MILLAY

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

WHEN I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
'Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away,
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free'
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
'The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain,
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
And sold for endless rue'
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true

A E HOUSMAN

FOR ANNE GREGORY

"NEVER shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-colored
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair"

"But I can get a hair-dye
And set such color there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair"

"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair"

W B YEATS

BY FIAT OF ADORATION

THIS is what we really want
Who drink the kingdom of the heart
A toast to the imagination

She is flowering in a doorway
Eyes cheeks haze of hair
Stepping out of time into here

This is what we really have
Who see the one we adore becoming
The two that she is in the light

Ah God bounces all the waters
From hand to jubilant hand
He cannot contain Himself

But comes over into being
With benediction of painted cloud
The being whom to look at is to become

By fiat of adoration do we reach
The very muscle of miracle
The ease with which beauty is beauty

OSCAR WILLIAMS

THE STRANGER

Now upon this piteous year
I sit in Denmark beside the quai
And nothing that the fishers say
Or the children carrying boats
Can recall me from that place
Where sense and wish departed me
Whose very shores take on
The whiteness of anon
For I beheld a stranger there
Who moved ahead of me,
So tensile and so dancer made
That like a thief I followed her
Though my heart was so alive
I felt myself the equal beauty
But when at last a turning came
Like the branching of a river
And I saw if she walked on
She would be gone forever,
Fear then so wounded me
As fell upon my ear
The voice a blind man dreams
And broke on me the smile
I dreamed as deaf men hear,
I stood there like a spy,
My tongue and eyelids taken
In such necessity
Now upon this piteous year
The rains of Autumn fall
Where may she be?
I suffered her to disappear
Who hunger in the prison of my fear
That lean and brown, that stride,
That cold and melting pride,

For whom the river like a clear,
Melodic line and the distant carrousel
Where lovers on their beasts of play
Rose and fell,
That wayfare where the swan adorned
With every wave and eddy
The honor of his sexual beauty,
Create her out of sorrow
That, never perishing,
Is a stately thing

JEAN GARRIGUE

MEN LOVED WHOLLY BEYOND WISDOM

MEN loved wholly beyond wisdom
Have the staff without the banner
Like a fire in a dry thicket,
Rising within women's eyes
Is the love men must return
Heart, so subtle now, and trembling,
What a marvel to be wise,
To love never in this manner!
To be quiet in the fern
Like a thing gone dead and still,
Listening to the prisoned cricket
Shake its terrible, dissembling
Music in the granite hill

LOUISE BOGAN

MY LOVE

my love
thy hair is one kingdom
 the king whereof is darkness
thy forehead is a flight of flowers

thy head is a quick forest
 filled with sleeping birds
thy breasts are swarms of white bees
 upon the bough of thy body
thy body to me is April
in whose armpits is the approach of spring

thy thighs are white horses yoked to a chariot
 of kings
they are the striking of a good minstrel
between them is always a pleasant song

my love
thy head is a casket
 of the cool jewel of thy mind
the hair of thy head is one warrior
 innocent of defeat
thy hair upon thy shoulders is an army
 with victory and with trumpets

thy legs are the trees of dreaming
whose fruit is the very eatage of forgetfulness

thy lips are satraps in scarlet
 in whose kiss is the combinings of kings
thy wrists
are holy
 which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood

thy feet upon thy ankles are flowers in vases
of silver

in thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes

thy eyes are the betrayal
of bells comprehended through incense

E E CUMMINGS

THE MIRAGE

I LIVED a life without love, and saw the being
I loved on every branch, then that bare tree
Stood up with all its branches up, a great harp
Growing straight out of the ground, and there I saw
A squadron of bright birds clothing the bare limbs,
The music notes sat on the harp, it was all love

This was the heart inside the starved body,
Love grew images like cactus, and planted roses
On the walls of the mirage, and the garden grew
Shining with perfume and the senses dwindled to dew,
The century was rolled into one formation aloft,
A cloud, like St Veronica's handkerchief of love

There I saw the face of the one without whom
I lived, two soft jewels implanted in her face,
Her hair pouring around her face without sound,
And her love for me sprang on her skin like dew,
Pearl-grey as the flower of the brain she lay
Quivering on the soft cushion of the great day

I heard a roar of buildings at my conscience,
I looked up and saw a wall of windows glowing,
And there my love leaned out of each window,
There she leaned out multiplied like heaven
In that vast wall of lights, every light her face,
Suns of a thousand mornings ranging on one day

And all the machines were running, and yes, great
Was the sound of their running downward and down
Into the blind chutes of their rooted feet,
And all of the windows quivered with my many loves,
Like apples they fell off at one windfall, all,
And I awoke on the starved pavements of no love

OSCAR WILLIAMS

A LOVE FOR PATSY

SEE the little maunderer
Stretch out on the grass!
His heart is burst asunder
The pieces cry Alas

Upright, fat pink pieces
Of fluffy cloud float overhead
The little facets of his eyes
Split by salty tears, so tired

Of seeing pieces of the world
Close, and rustling grass,
Caws of an old unpleasant bird
Are sounds that say Alas,

They float like notes in the funny paper,
Round notes with sharp little tails
Oh I'm blue, the supine moper
Says, I'm trapped in the toils

Of Patsy's black black hair
Her hair is like the cool dry night
That waves through the window-bar
Where a moody jailbird sits apart

Shuffling his broken heart I'm sad
As I can be Her black
Black hair can never be compared
To dull dichotomic

Trees or prickly grass, inflated
Clouds, even a great
One draped on the sun Over-rated
Senseless things to stare at,

One here one there they're strewn,
Impinging pieces left out of
The world Her eyes are green!
Oh oh, he says, I die of love

See the weeping little wretch
He rolls in a frenzy!
In all the world no two things match
But the green eyes of Patsy

JOHN THOMPSON, JR

SOMEWHERE I HAVE NEVER TRAVELLED, GLADLY BEYOND

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclothe me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending,

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens, only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

E E CUMMINGS

SONG

You are as gold
As the half-ripe grain
That merges to gold again,
As white as the white rain
That beats through
The half-opened flowers
Of the great flower tufts
Thick on the black limbs
Of an Illyrian apple bough

Can honey distil such fragrance
As your bright hair—
For your face is as fair as rain,
Yet as rain that lies clear
On white honey-comb,
Lends radiance to the white wax
So your hair on your brow
Casts light for a shadow

H D

I HEAR AN ARMY CHARGING UPON THE LAND

I HEAR an army charging upon the land
And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their
knees
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the
charioteers

This is one reason for writing far from one's
heart,
a better is, that one fears it may be hurt

By an inadequate style one fears to cheapen
glory, and that it may be blurred if seen
through the eye's used centre, not the new margin
It is the hardest thing with love to burn
and write it down, for what was the real passion
left to its own words will seem trivial and thin
We can in making love look face to face
in poetry, crooked, and with no embrace

Tolstoy's hero found in his newborn child
only another aching, vulnerable part,
and it is true our first joy hundredfold
increased our dangers, pricking in every street
in accidents and wars yet this is healed
not by reason, but the endurance of delight
since our marriage, which, once thoroughly
known,
is known for good, though in time it were gone

You, hopeful baby with the erring toes,
grew, it seems to me, to a natural pleasure
in the elegant strict machine, from the abstruse
science of printing to the rich red and azure
it plays on hoardings, rusty industrial noise,
all these could add to your inherited treasure
a poise which many wish for, writing the
machine
poems of laboured praise, but few attain

And loitered up your childhood to my arms
I would hold you there for ever, and know

certainly now, that though the vacuum glooms,
quotidian dullness, in these beams don't die,
they're wrong who say that happiness never comes
on earth, that has spread here its crystal sea
And since you, loiterer, did compose this
wonder,
be with me still, and may God hold his thunder

ANNE RIDLER

WHEN YON FULL MOON

WHEN yon full moon's with her white fleet of stars,
And but one bird makes music in the grove,
When you and I are breathing side by side,
Where our two bodies make one shadow, love,

Not for her beauty will I praise the moon,
But that she lights thy purer face and throat,
The only praise I'll give the nightingale
Is that she draws from thee a richer note

For, blinded with thy beauty, I am filled,
Like Saul of Tarsus, with a greater light,
When he had heard that warning voice in Heaven,
And lost his eyes to find a deeper sight

Come, let us sit in that deep silence then,
Launched on love's rapids, with our passions proud,
That makes all music hollow—though the lark
Raves in his windy heights above a cloud

W H DAVIES

HYMN TO HER UNKNOWN

IN despair at not being able to rival the creations of God
I thought on her
Whom I saw on the twenty-fourth of August nineteen
thirty-four
Having tea on the fifth story of Swan and Edgar's
In Piccadilly Circus

She sat facing me with an older woman and a younger
And a little boy aged about five,
I could see that she was his mother,
Also she wore a wedding ring and one set with diamonds

She was about twenty-five years old,
Slim, graceful, disciplined,
She had none of the mannerisms of the suburbs,
No affectations, a low clear speech, good manners,
Hair thick and undyed
She knew that she was beautiful and exceedingly attractive,
Every line of her dress showed it,
She was cool and determined and laughed heartily,
A wide mouth with magnificent teeth

And having said this I come to the beginning of my
despair,
Despair that I in no way can describe her
Or bring before the eyes of the present or the future
This image that I saw

Hundreds and hundreds of women do I see
But rarely a woman on whom my eyes linger
As the eyes of Venus lingered on Adonis

What is the use of being a poet?
Is it not a farce to call an artist a creator,
Who can create nothing, not even re-present what his
eyes have seen?

She never showed a sign that she saw me
But I knew and she knew that I knew—
Our eyes fleeting past, never meeting directly
Like that vernal twinkling of butterflies
To which Coleridge compared Shakespeare's *Venus and
Adonis*

And, like Venus, I lavished my love upon her
I dallied with her hair, her delicate skin and smooth
limbs,
On her arms were heavy thick bangles
Like the ropes of my heart's blood

Could I express the ecstasy of my adoration?
Mating with her were itself a separation!
Only our bodies fusing in a flame of crystal
Burning in an infinite empyrean
Until all the blue of the limitless heaven were drunken
In one globe of united perfection
Like a bubble that is all the oceans of the world ascend-
ing

To the fire that is the fire of fires, transcending
The love of God, the love of God, the love of God—
Ah! my pitiful efforts now ending
I remember a bough of coral
Flower of the transparent sea
Delicate pink as though a ray of the sun descending
Pathless into the ocean
Printed the foot of Venus
Where bloomed this asphodel

W J TURNER

AN IMMORALITY

SING we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing

EZRA POUND

THE EQUILIBRISTS

FULL of her long white arms and milky skin
He had a thousand times remembered sin
Alone in the press of people travelled he,
Minding her jacinth and myrrh and ivory

Mouth he remembered the quaint orifice
From which came heat that flamed upon the kiss,
Till cold words came down spiral from the head,
Grey doves from the officious tower ilsped

Body it was a white field ready for love,
On her body's field, with the gaunt tower above,
The lilies grew, beseeching him to take,
If he would pluck and wear them, bruise and break

Eyes talking Never mind the cruel words,
Embrace my flowers but not embrace the swords
But what they said, the doves came straightway flying
And unsaid Honor, Honor, they came crying

Importunate her doves Too pure, too wise,
Clambering on his shoulder, saying, Arise,
Leave me now, and never let us meet,
Eternal distance now command thy feet

Predicament indeed, which thus discovers
Honor among thieves, Honor between lovers
O such a little word is Honor, they feel!
But the grey word is between them cold as steel

At length I saw these lovers fully were come
Into their torture of equilibrium
Dreadfully had forsworn each other, and yet
They were bound each to each, and they did not forget

And rigid as two painful stars, and twirled
About the clustered night their prison world,
They burned with fierce love always to come near,
But Honor beat them back and kept them clear

Ah, the strict lovers, they are ruined now!
I cried in anger But with puddled brow
Devising for those gibbeted and brave
Came I descanting Man, what would you have?

For spin your period out, and draw your breath,
A kinder sæculum begins with Death
Would you ascend to Heaven and bodiless dwell?
Or take your bodies honorless to Hell?

In Heaven you have heard no marriage is,
No white flesh tinder to your lecheries,
Your male and female tissue sweetly shaped
Sublimed away, and furious blood escaped

Great lovers lie in Hell, the stubborn ones
Infatuate of the flesh upon the bones,
Stuprate, they rend each other when they kiss,
The pieces kiss again—no end to this

But still I watched them spinning, orbited nice
Their flames were not more radiant than their ice
I dug in the quiet earth and wrought the tomb
And made these lines to memorize their doom —

*Equilibrists lie here, stranger, tread light,
Close, but untouching in each other's sight,
Mouldered the lips and ashy the tall skull,
Let them lie perilous and beautiful*

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

I HEARD A LINNET COURTING

I HEARD a linnet courting
His lady in the spring
His mates were idly sporting,
Nor staved to hear him sing
His song of love—
I fear my speech distorting
His tender love

The phrases of his pleading
Were full of young delight,
And she that gave him heeding
Interpreted aright
His gay, sweet notes,—
So sadly marred in the reading,—
His tender notes

And when he ceased, the hearer
Awaited the refrain,
Till swiftly perching nearer
He sang his song again,
His pretty song —
Would that my verse spake clearer
His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!
That in the merry spring
Think not of what misfeatures
Or cares the year may bring,
But unto love
Resign your simple natures
To tender love

ROBERT BRIDGES

THE MARRIAGE OF A VIRGIN

WAKING alone in a multitude of loves when morning's
light
Surprised in the opening of her nightlong eyes
His golden yesterday asleep upon the iris
And this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs

Was miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes,
Though the moment of a miracle is unending lightning
And the shipyards of Galilee's footprints hide a navy of
doves

No longer will the vibrations of the sun desire on
Her deepsea pillow where once she married alone,
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her
mercury bone,
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden
luggage,
For a man sleeps where fire leaped down and she learns
through his arm
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled
blood

DYLAN THOMAS

THE GREAT LOVER

I HAVE been so great a lover filled my days
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me

High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The menarrable godhead of delight?
Love is a flame,—we have beacons the world's night
A city —and we have built it, these and I
An emperor —we have taught the world to die
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming

These I have loved

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines, and feathery, faery dust,
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light, the strong crust
Of friendly bread, and many-tasting food,
Rainbows, and the blue bitter smoke of wood,
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers,
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon,
Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble, and the rough male kiss
Of blankets, grainy wood, live hair that is
Shining and free, blue-massing clouds, the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine,
The benison of hot water, furs to touch,
The good smell of old clothes, and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns

Dear names,
And thousand others throng to me! Royal flames,

Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring,
Holes in the ground, and voices that do sing
Voices in laughter, too, and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace, and the deep-panting train,
Firm sands, the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home,
And washen stones, gay for an hour, the cold
Graveness of iron, moist black earthen mould,
Sleep, and high places, footprints in the dew,
And oaks, and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new,
And new-peeled sticks, and shining pools on grass,—
All these have been my loves And these shall pass
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death
They'll play deserter, turn with traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust

—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers

But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies

Nothing remains

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed
Praise you, "All these were lovely", say, "He loved "

RUPERT BROOKE

TO A FRIEND ON HIS MARRIAGE

A BEAUTIFUL girl said something in your praise
And either because in a hundred ways
I had heard of her great worth and had no doubt
To find her lovelier than I thought
And found her also cleverer, or because
Although she had known you well it was
For her too as it had once been for me
Thinking of her I thought that she
Had spoken of you as rare and legendary
Now again hearing that you marry
My insatiable sense of glory and
My passion for the gay and grand
Deliver you up to fiction A beautiful
Girl might once have played the fool
If you had called the tune, and I would too
If anything that I might do
Could ruffle up your rose or flush your glass
Because you are all things and because
You show the world the glitter in the face
Of that all-but-extinguished race
Of creatures who delight in and desire
Much less the fuel than the fire
I wish that when you call for supper, when
You sit down, guests and serving-men
May seem light-bearers planted on the stair,
Lights in the roof, lights everywhere
So that as if you were a salamander
Your sensuality may wander
In a community of flames, and breathe
Contentment, savouring wine and wreath

F T PRINCE

FIRST WARM DAYS

APRIL, up on a twig a leafy tuft stands
And heaven lifts a hundred miles mildly
Comes and fondles our faces, playing friends—
Such a one day often concludes coldly—
Then in dark coats in the bare afternoon view
Idle people—we few who that day are—
Stroll in the park aimless and stroll by twos
Easy in the weather of our home star
And human faces—hardly changed after
Millennia—the separate single face
Placid, it turns toward friendly laughing
Or makes an iridescence, being at peace
We all are pleased by an air like of loving
Going home quiet in the subway-shoving

EDWIN DENBY

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD

I

AMONG twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds
It was a small part of the pantomime

IV

A man and a woman
Are one
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one

V

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause

VII

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird

Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms,
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles

X

At the sight of blackbirds
Flying in a green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply

XI

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackbirds

XII

The river is moving
The blackbird must be flying

XIII

It was evening all afternoon
It was snowing
And it was going to snow
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs

WALLACE STEVENS

HUMMING-BIRD

I CAN imagine, in some otherworld
Primeval-dumb, far back
In that most awful stillness, that only gasped and
hummed,
Humming-birds raced down the avenues

Before anything had a soul,
While life was a heave of Matter, half inanimate,
This little bit chipped off in brilliance
And went whizzing through the slow, vast, succulent
stems

I believe there were no flowers then,
In the world where the humming-bird flashed ahead of
creation
I believe he pierced the slow vegetable veins with his
long beak

Probably he was big
As mosses, and little lizards, they say, were once big
Probably he was a jabbing, terrifying monster

We look at him through the wrong end of the long tele-
scope of Time,
Luckily for us

D H LAWRENCE

NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams wherefrom
 Ye learn your song
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
 Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
 Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
 A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
 No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
 For all our art

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret, and then,
 As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs
 of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
 Welcome the dawn

ROBERT BRIDGES

ST URSANNE

LEAVING the viaduct on the left, and coming over the
hill,

We came to a small town, four towers at the corners,
The streets narrow and not dark,
The children playing in green gardens by the waterside

Was it at the Swan or the White Horse that we stopped ?
We walked up to the church and the stone cloister,
Grass growing among the tangle of votive ribbons,
The wax flowers and the twisted wire

We heard the town-crier ringing a bell under the town
clock—

Something about a wandering cow and a job for a wag-
goner,

Then we looked at the watermill by the stone bridge,
And went back for a Cointreau or a Cinzano

That was at Eastertide, and the fields and meadows
Mellow with cowslips there were boys on bicycles
With bandoliers of jonquils, and there was an old lady
With a basket of primroses and violets

It was a quiet town, and not yet broken,
The people kindly, and the priest 'a good one as priests
go',

There was a football team, and a lad who enters from
the country in the morning,
Singing Ohé Oh, Ohé Oh!

MICHAEL ROBERTS

ADLESTROP

YES, I remember Adlestrop—
The name—because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly It was late June

The steam hissed Someone cleared his throat
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name—

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire

EDWARD THOMAS

SUNRISE ON RYDAL WATER

COME down at dawn from windless hills
Into the valley of the lake,
Where yet a larger quiet fills
The hour, and mist and water make

With rocks and reeds and island boughs
One silence and one element,
Where wonder goes surely as once
It went
By Galilean prow

Moveless the water and the mist,
Moveless the secret air above,
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst
The poised expectancy of love,
What spirit is it that adores
What mighty presence yet unseen ?
What consummation works apace
Between
These rapt enchanted shores ?

Never did virgin beauty wake
Devouter to the bridal feast
Than moves this hour upon the lake
In adoration to the east
Here is the bride a god may know,
The primal will, the young consent,
Till surely upon the appointed mood
Intent
The god shall leap—and lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun—
White flameless fire, some purity
Thrilling the mist, a splendor won
Out of the world's heart Let there be
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires,
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue,
Where now we move with mortal care
Among
Immortal dews and fires

So the old mating goes apace,
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,
Lover with lover, and the grace
Of understanding comes unsought
When stars into the twilight steer,
Or thrushes build among the may,
Or wonder moves between the hills,
And day
Comes up on Rydal mere

JOHN DRINKWATER

THE CRIMSON CHERRY TREE

THERE is no sweeter sight, I swear, in Heaven
Than blossom on the cherry trees by Clee
Ah dainty brides, you dance on through my dreams
And in the town bring memory of a breeze
That blew from Corvedale, across the valley that
Must have run red with agony when Owen spoke,
Torturing the air about his council-chair
With shapes of fiery dragons flaming, wolves
That ran through city gates to bring despair
Upon the tow-haired marchers, tearing sheep
And leaving foul the water-holes I feel
The failure of a people when that wind
Howls through my heart and shows me Caradoc
Heaped high with lads who should have brought their
songs
Right to the walls of Ludlow, over Severn,
Regaining the green pastures with a word

Ah, cherry tree, so lissom in the wind,
Matter for poets and the love-sick mad,
I see your virgin blossom splashed with blood,
Bright red against the white, and at your feet
The gentle lord who walked without a sword,
Believing tales of peace among the hills,
Trusting the word, the signatory name,
Forgetting the black seasons of a race

HENRY TREECE

CARGOES

QUINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays

JOHN MASEFIELD

A CITY AFTERNOON

GREEN afternoon serene and bright, along my street you
sail away
Sun-dappled like a ship of light that glints upon a
rippled bay
Afar, freight-engines call and toll, the sprays flash on
the fragrant grass,
The children and the nurses stroll, the charging motors
plunge and pass
Invisibly the shadows grow, empurpling in a rising tide
The walks where light-gowned women go, white curb,
gray asphalt iris-dyed
A jolting trolley shrills afar, nasturtiums blow, and ivy
vines,
Wet scents of turf and black-smoothed tar float down the
roof-trees' vergent lines
Where will you go, my afternoon, that glints so still and
swift away,
Blue-shaded like a ship of light bound outward from a
wimpled bay?
Oh—thrilling, pulsing, dark and bright, shall you, your
work, your pain, your mirth,
Fly into the immortal night and silence of our mother
earth?
She bore all Eden's green and dew, and Persia's scented
wine and rose,
And, flowering white against the blue, acanthus leaf and
marbled pose
And deep the Maenad's choric dance, Crusader's cross,
and heathen crest
Lie sunk with rose and song and lance all veiled and
vanished in her breast

And all those afternoons once danced and sparkled in the
sapphire light
And iris shade as you have glanced, green afternoon, in
vibrant flight
As, down dim vistas, echoing, dead afternoons entreat
our days,
What breath of beauty will you sing to souls unseen and
unknown ways?
How close and how unanswering, green afternoon, you
pulse away,
So little and so great a thing—deep towards the bourne
of every day

EDITH WYATT

AUTO WRECK

Its quick soft silver bell beating, beating,
And down the dark one ruby flare
Pulsing out red light like an artery,
The ambulance at top speed floating down
Past beacons and illuminated clocks
Wings in a heavy curve, dips down,
And brakes speed, entering the crowd
The doors leap open, emptying light,
Stretchers are laid out, the mangled lifted
And stowed into the little hospital
Then the bell, breaking the hush, tolls once,
And the ambulance with its terrible cargo
Rocking, slightly rocking, moves away,
As the doors, an afterthought, are closed.

We are deranged, walking among the cops
Who sweep glass and are large and composed
One is still making notes under the light
One with a bucket douches ponds of blood
Into the street and gutter
One hangs lanterns on the wrecks that cling,
Empty husks of locusts, to iron poles

Our throats were tight as tourniquets,
Our feet were bound with splints, but now
Like convalescents intimate and gauche,
We speak through sickly smiles and warn
With the stubborn saw of common sense,
The grim joke and the banal resolution
The traffic moves around with care,
But we remain, touching a wound
That opens to our richest horror

Already old, the question Who shall die?
Becomes unspoken Who is innocent?
For death in war is done by hands,
Suicide has cause and stillbirth, logic
But this invites the occult mind,
Cancels our physics with a sneer,
And spatters all we knew of denouement
Across the expedient and wicked stones

KARL SHAPIRO

A DOME OF SUNDAY

With focus sharp as Flemish-painted face
In film of varnish brightly fixed
And through a polished hand-lens deeply seen,

Sunday at noon through hyaline thin air
Sees down the street,
And in the camera of my eye depicts
Row-houses and row-lives
Glass after glass, door after door the same,
Face after face the same, the same,
The brutal visibility the same,

As if one life emerging from one house
Would pause, a single image caught between
Two facing mirrors where vision multiplies
Beyond perspective,
A silent clatter in the high-speed eye
Spinning out photo-circulars of sight

I see slip to the curb the long machines
Out of whose warm and windowed rooms pirouette
Shellacked with silk and light
The hard legs of our women
Our women are one woman, dressed in black
The carmine printed mouth
And cheeks as soft as muslin-glass belong
Outright to one dark dressy man
Merely a swagger at her curvy side

This is their visit to themselves
All day from porch to porch they weave
A nonsense pattern through the even glare,
Stealing in surfaces
Cold vulgar glances at themselves

And high up in the heated room all day
I wait behind the plate glass pane for one,
Hot as a voyeur for a glimpse of one,
The vision to blot out this woman's sheen,

All day my sight records expensively
Row-houses and row-lives

But nothing happens, no diagonal
With melting shadow falls across the curb
Neither the blinded negress lurching through fatigue,
Nor exiles bleeding from their pores,
Nor that bright bomb slipped lightly from its rack
To splinter every silvered glass and crystal prism,
Witch-bowl and perfume bottle
And billion candle-power dressing-bulb,
No direct hit to smash the shatter-proof
And lodge at last the quivering needle
Clean in the eye of one who stands transfixed
In fascination of her brightness

KARL SHAPIRO

LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN SHINES

LIGHT breaks where no sun shines,
Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart
Push in their tides,
And, broken ghosts with glowworms in their heads,
The things of light
File through the flesh where no flesh decks the bones

A candle in the thighs
Warms youth and seed and burns the seeds of age,
Where no seed stirs,
The fruit of man unwrinkles in the stars,
Bright as a fig,
Where no wax is, the candle shows its hairs

Dawn breaks behind the eyes,
From poles of skull and toe the windy blood
Slides like a sea,
Nor fenced, nor staked, the gushers of the sky
Spout to the rod
Divining in a smile the oil of tears

Night in the sockets rounds,
Like some pitch moon, the limit of the globes,
Day lights the bone,
Where no cold is, the skinning gales unpin
The winter's robes,
The film of spring is hanging from the lids

Light breaks on secret lots,
On tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain,
When logics die,
The secret of the soil grows through the eye,
And blood jumps in the sun,
Above the waste allotments the dawn halts

DYLAN THOMAS

O GOLDEN FLEECE SHE IS

O GOLDEN FLEECE she is where she lies tonight
Trammelled in her sheets like midsummer on a bed,
Kisses like moths flutter over her bright
Mouth, and, as she turns her head,
I feel all space move close to give her right

Where her hand, like a bird on the branch of her arm,
Droops its wings over the bedside as she sleeps,

There the air perpetually remains warm
Since, nested, her hand rested there And she keeps
Under her green thumb life like a growing poem

My nine-tiered tigress in the cage of sex
I feed with meat that you tear from my side
To crown your nine months with the paradox
The love that kisses with a homicide
In robes of generation resurrects

The bride who rides the hymeneal waterfall
Spawning all possibles in her pools of surplus,
Whom the train rapes going into a tunnel,
The imperial multiplier nothing can nonplus
My mother Nature is the origin of it all

At Pharaoh's Feast and in the family cupboard,
Gay corpse, bright skeleton, and the fly in amber,
She sits with her laws like antlers from her forehead
Enmeshing everyone, with flowers and thunder
Adorning the head that destiny never worried

GEORGE BARKER

TORTOISE SHOUT

I THOUGHT he was dumb,
I said he was dumb,
Yet I've heard him cry

First faint scream,
Out of life's unfathomable dawn,

Far off, so far, like a madness, under the horizon's dawn-
ing rim,
Far, far off, far scream

Tortoise in extremis

Why were we crucified into sex?
Why were we not left rounded off, and finished in our-
selves,
As we began,
As he certainly began, so perfectly alone?

A far, was-it-audible scream,
Or did it sound on the plasm direct?

Worse than the cry of the new-born,
A scream,
A yell,
A shout,
A paean,
A death-agony,
A birth-cry,
A submission,
All tiny, tiny, far away, reptile under the first dawn
War-cry, triumph, acute-delight, death-scream reptilian,
Why was the veil torn?
The silken shriek of the soul's torn membrane?
The male soul's membrane
Torn with a shriek half music, half horror

Crucifixion

Male tortoise, cleaving behind the hovel-wall of that
dense female,
Mounted and tense, spread-eagle, out-reaching out of
the shell

In tortoise-nakedness,
Long neck, and long vulnerable limbs extruded, spread-
eagle over her house-roof,
And the deep, secret, all-penetrating tail curved beneath
her walls,
Reaching and gripping tense, more reaching anguish in
uttermost tension
Till suddenly, in the spasm of cotion, tugging like a
jerking leap, and oh!
Opening its clenched face from his outstretched neck
And giving that fragile yell, that scream,
Super-audible,
From his pink, cleft, old-man's mouth,
Giving up the ghost,
Or screaming in Pentecost, receiving the ghost

His scream, and his moment's subsidence,
The moment of eternal silence,
Yet unreleased, and after the moment, the sudden, start-
ling jerk of cotion, and at once
The inexpressible faint yell—
And so on, till the last plasm of my body was melted
back
To the primeval¹ rudiments of life, and the secret

So he tugs, and screams
Time after time that frail, torn scream
After each jerk, the longish interval,
The tortoise eternity,
Age-long, reptilian persistence,
Heart-throb, slow heart-throb, persistent for the next
spasm

I remember, when I was a boy,
I heard the scream of a frog, which was caught with his

foot in the mouth of an up-starting snake,
I remember when I first heard bull-frogs break into
sound in the spring,
I remember hearing a wild goose out of the throat of
night
Cry loudly, beyond the lake of waters,
I remember the first time, out of a bush in the darkness,
a nightingale's piercing cries and gurgles startled the
depths of my soul,
I remember the scream of a rabbit as I went through a
wood at midnight,
I remember the heifer in her heat, blorting and blorting
through the hours, persistent and irrepressible,
I remember my first terror hearing the howl of weird
amorous cats,
I remember the scream of a terrified, injured horse, the
sheet-lightning,
And running away from the sound of a woman in labour,
something like an owl whooping,

And listening inwardly to the first bleat of a lamb,
The first wail of an infant,
And my mother singing to herself,
And the first tenor singing of the passionate throat of a
young collier, who has long since drunk himself to
death,
The first elements of foreign speech
On wild dark lips

And more than all these,
And less than all these,
This last,
Strange, faint cotton yell
Of the male tortoise at extremity,
Tiny from under the very edge of the farthest far-off
horizon of life

The cross,
The wheel on which our silence first is broken,
Sex, which breaks up our integrity, our single inviolability, our deep silence,

Tearing a cry from us
Sex, which breaks us into voice, sets us calling across the
 deeps, calling, calling for the complement,
Singing, and calling, and singing again, being answered,
 having found

Torn, to become whole again, after long seeking for what
 is lost,
The same cry from the tortoise as from Christ, the
 Osiris-cry of abandonment,
That which is whole, torn asunder,
That which is in part, finding its whole again throughout the universe

D H LAWRENCE

THE ELEPHANT IS SLOW TO MATE

THE elephant, the huge old beast is slow to mate,
he finds a female, they show no haste, they wait

for the sympathy in their vast shy hearts slowly, slowly
 to rouse
as they loiter along the river-beds and drink and browse

and dash in panic through the brake of forest with the
 herd,
and sleep in massive silence, and wake together, without a word

So slowly the great hot elephant hearts grow full of
desire,
and the great beasts mate in secret at last, hiding their
fire

Oldest they are and the wisest of beasts so they know at
last
how to wait for the loneliest of feasts for the full repast

They do not snatch, they do not tear, their massive
blood
moves as the moon-tides, near, more near till they touch
in flood

D H LAWRENCE

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

TWENTY-FOUR years remind the tears of my eyes
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in
labour)
In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a
tailor
Sewing a shroud for a journey
By the light of the meat-eating sun
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,
With my red veins full of money,
In the final direction of the elementary town
I advance for as long as forever is

DYLAN THOMAS

SPRING AND FALL TO A YOUNG CHILD

MARGARÉT, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie,
And yet you will weep and know why
Now no matter, child, the name
Sórrów's springs are the same
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

L'AN TRENTIESME DE MON EAGE

AND I have come upon this place
By lost ways, by a nod, by words,
By faces, by an old man's face
At Morlaix lifted to the birds,

By hands upon the tablecloth
At Aldebori's, by the thin
Child's hands that opened to the moth
And let the flutter of the moonlight in,

By hands, by voices, by the voice
Of Mrs Husman on the stair,
By Margaret's "If we had the choice
To choose or not"—through her thick hair,

By voices, by the creak and fall
Of footsteps on the upper floor,
By silence waiting in the hall
Between the doorbell and the door,

By words, by voices, a lost way—
And here above the chimney stack
The unknown constellations sway—
And by what way shall I go back?

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

THE MAN COMING TOWARD YOU

THE man coming toward you is falling forward on all
fronts

He has just come in from the summer hot box of cir-
cumstance,

His obedient arm pulls a ticket from the ticket machine,
A bell announces to the long tables his presence on the
scene

The room is crowded with Last Suppers and the air is
angry,

The halleluiahs lift listless heads, the man is hungry

He looks at the people, the rings of lights, the aisles, the
chairs,

They mass and attack his eyes and they take him un-
aware,
But in a moment it is over and the immense hippopota-
mus cries
And swims away to safety in the vast past of his eyes,
The weeks recoil before the days, the years before the
months,
The man is hungry and keeps moving forward on all
fronts

His hair is loosening, his teeth are at bay, he breathes
fear,
His nails send futile tendrils into the belly of the
atmosphere,
Every drop of his blood is hanging loose in the universe,
His children's faces everywhere bring down the college
doors,
He is growing old on all fronts, his foes and his friends
Are bleeding behind invisible walls bedecked with divi-
dends,

His wife is aging, and his skin puts on its anonymous
gloves,
The man is helpless, surrounded by two billion hates and
loves,
Look at him squirm inside his clothes, the harpies around
his ears,
In just one minute his brothers will have aged four thou-
sand years
Who records his stupendous step on the delicate ear-
drum of Chance?
The man coming toward you is marching forward on
all fronts

OSCAR WILLIAMS

Not within the singeing of the strong sun,
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the
earth's air,
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah well where! one,
Oñe Yes I can tell such a key, I do know such a place,
Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything
that's fresh and fast flying of us, seems to us sweet of
us and swiftly away with, done away with, undone,
Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and
dangerously sweet
Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-
matchèd face,
The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to, ah!
to fleet,
Never fleets móre, fastened with the tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth it is
an ever-lastingness of, O it is an all youth!
Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maiden
gear, gallantry and gaiety and grace,
Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet
looks, loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going
gallant, girlgrace—
Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion
them with breath,
And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver
Them, beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long
before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God,
beauty's self and beauty's giver
See, not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost;
every hair
Is, hair of the head, numbered
Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surly the mere
mould

Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with
the wind whatwhile we slept,
This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold
Whatwhile we, while we slumbered
O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are
we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed,
so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered,
When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a
care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it)
finer, fonder
A care kept —Where kept? Do but tell us where kept,
where —
Yonder —What high as that! We follow, now we follow
—Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,
Yonder

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

AFTER LONG SILENCE

SPEECH after long silence, it is right,
All other lovers being estranged or dead,
Unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade,
The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,
That we descant and yet again descant
Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song
Bodily decrepitude is wisdom, young
We loved each other and were ignorant

W B YEATS

THE LONG HILL

I MUST have passed the crest a while ago
And now I am going down—
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
But the brambles were always catching the hem of my
gown

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under
me—
But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen

It was nearly level along the beaten track
And the brambles caught in my gown—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
The rest of the way will be only going down

SARA TEASDALE

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

THAT is no country for old men The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,

Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unaging intellect

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence,
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul
Consume my heart away, sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is, and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enameling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake,
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come

W B YEATS

ON GROWING OLD

BE with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying,
My dog and I are old, too old for roving
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving

I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves, minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart, a withered wire
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet

I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland nor your hill-land nor your valleys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies,

Only stay quiet, while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers

Beauty, have pity, for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,
Springtime of man all April in a face

Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud,
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,

So, from this glittering world with all its fashion,
Its fire and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch

Give me but these, and though the darkness close
Even the night will blossom as the rose

JOHN MASEFIELD

A MINUET ON REACHING THE AGE OF FIFTY

OLD Age, on tiptoe, lays her jewelled hand
Lightly in mine —Come, tread a stately measure
Most gracious partner, nobly posed and bland
Ours be no boisterous pleasure,
But smiling conversation, with quick glance
And memories dancing lightlier than we dance,
Friends who a thousand joys
Divide and double, save one joy supreme
Which many a pang alloys
Let wanton girls and boys
Cry over lovers' woes and broken toys
Our waking life is sweeter than their dream

Dame Nature, with unwitting hand,
Has sparsely strewn the black abyss with lights
Minute, remote, and numberless We stand
Measuring far depths and heights,
Arched over by a laughing heaven,
Intangible and never to be scaled
If we confess our sins, they are forgiven
We triumph, if we know we failed

Tears that in youth you shed,
Congealed to pearls, now deck your silvery hair,

Sighs breathed for loves long dead
Frosted the glittering atoms of the air
 Into the veils you wear
Round your soft bosom and most queenly head,
 The shimmer of your gown
Catches all tints of autumn, and the dew
Of gardens where the damask roses blew,

The myriad tapers from these arches hung
 Play on your diamonded crown,
And stars, whose light angelical caressed
 Your virgin days,
Give back in your calm eyes their holier rays
 The deep past living in your breast
Heaves these half-merry sighs,
 And the soft accents of your tongue
Breathe unrecorded charities

Hasten not, the feast will wait
This is a master-night without a morrow
No chill and haggard dawn, with after-sorrow,
 Will snuff the spluttering candle out,
Or blanch the revellers homeward straggling late
 Before the rout
Wearies or wanes, will come a calmer trance
Lulled by the popped fragrance of this bower,
 We'll cheat the lapsing hour,
And close our eyes, still smiling, on the dance

GEORGE SANTAYANA

SUMMER RAIN

AGAINST the window pane
against the temple of my brain
beat the muffled taps of rain

Upon the scorched and mottled leaves
upon the blenched and pented sheaves
the land receives

the liquid flood
water like a blush of blood
returns to the parched rood

The fox has left his fetid hovel
to lick the drenched blades of sorrel,
odours rise from thyme and fennel

The worm in his retreat deep under
the earth's insipid crust
hearing a distant drumming thunder

blindly renews his upward undulation
The soil respire as if in emulation
of living things All elements of maculation

desire and achieve A warm breath
issues from the nostrils beneath
the mask of death

HERBERT READ

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling

I there before thee, in the country that well thou
knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding

ROBERT BRIDGES

WINTER TRYST

WHEN the Atlantic upsloped itself
Like roofs of higher and higher houses,
To the great ridge, the foaming shelf
Whereon no dolphin ever browses,

When the wild grey broke into white,
And ships rose endward, crushing mountains,
When it was thus, and icy light
Poured up from phosphorescent fountains

When it was thus, at winter's crest,
A vessel arrived and the annual ocean,
Faithfully setting her down in the west,
Repented awhile of its furious motion,

Subsided, but only until that prow
Was pointed again, and a passenger, waving,
Wept in the channel, reminded now
Of eleven months, and the duty of braving

A spring and a summer, and longer fall
Till the month of the year that was set for returning,
Then the grey slopes, and the port, and the tall
Still lover—O time! O bitter adjourning!

When the Atlantic upheaved its whole
And the bottomless world dared keels to try it
Then was the season, this poor soul
Only that month kept longing quiet

Only that month most difficult,
Most dark Most loveless, and most unable
Yet it was hers And time's result
Is love's most fair, most speechless fable

MARK VAN DOREN

ALCOHOL

ON golden seas of drink, so the Greek poet said,
Rich and poor are alike Looking around in war
We watch the many who have returned to the dead
Ordering time-and-again the same-as-before

Those Haves who cannot bear making a choice,
Those Have-nots who are bored with having nothing to
choose,
Call for their drinks in the same tone of voice,
Find a factitious popular front in booze

Another drink Bacchylides was right
And self-deception golden—Serve him quick,
The siphon stutters in the archaic night,
The flesh is willing and the soul is sick

Another drink Adam is back in the Garden
Another drink the snake is back on the tree
Let your brain go soft, your arteries will harden
If God's a peeping tom he'll see what he shall see

Another drink Cain has slain his brother
Another drink Cain, they say, is cursed

Another and another and another—
The beautiful ideologies have burst

A bottle swings on a string The matt-grey iron ship,
Which ought to have been the Future, sidles by
And with due auspices descends the slip
Into an ocean where no auspices apply

Take away your slogans, give us something to swallow,
Give us beer or brandy or schnapps or gin,
This is the only road for the self-betrayed to follow—
The last way out that leads not out but in

LOUIS MACNEICE

THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING ROOM

UNDER the hive-like dome the stooping haunted readers
Go up and down the alleys, tap the cells of knowledge—
Honey and wax, the accumulation of years—
Some on commission, some for the love of learning,
Some because they have nothing better to do
Or because they hope these walls of books will deaden
The drumming of the demon in their ears

Cranks, hacks, poverty-stricken scholars,
In pince-nez, period hats or romantic beards
And cherishing their hobby or their doom
Some are too much alive and some are asleep
Hanging like bats in a world of inverted values,
Folded up in themselves in a world which is safe and
silent

This is the British Museum Reading Room

Out on the steps in the sun the pigeons are courting,
Puffing their ruffs and sweeping their tails or taking
 A sun-bath at their ease
And under the totem poles—the ancient terror—
Between the enormous fluted Ionic columns
There seeps from heavily jowled or hawk-like foreign
 faces
 The guttural sorrow of the refugees

LOUIS MACNEICE

EPISTLE I

MEETING a monster of mourning wherever I go
Who crosses me at morning and evening also,
For whom are you miserable I ask and he murmurs
I am miserable for innumerable man for him
Who wanders through Woolworth's gazing at tin stars,
I mourn the maternal future tense, Time's mother,
Who has him in her lap, and I mourn also her,
Time whose dial face flashes with scars

I gave the ghost my money and he smiled and said,
Keep it for the eyeballs of the dead instead
Why here, I asked, why is it here you come
Breaking into the evening line going to another,
Edging your axe between my pencil fingers,
Twisting my word from a comedy to a crime?
I am the face once seen never forgotten,
Whose human look your dirty page will smother

I know what it was, he said, that you were beginning,
The rigmarole of private life's belongings
Birth, boyhood, and the adolescent baloney So I say
Good go ahead, and see what happens then
I promise you horror shall stand in your shoes,
And when your register of youth is through
What will it be but about the horror of man?
Try telling about birth and observe the issue

Epping Forest where the deer and girls
Mope like lost ones looking for Love's gaols—
Among the dilapidated glades my mother wandered
With me as a kid, and sadly we saw
The deer in the rain near the trees, the leaf-hidden dung,
The Sunday papers, and the foliage's falling world,
I not knowing nothing was our possession,
Not knowing Poverty my position

Epping Forest gluttoned with the green tree
Grew up again like a sea wood inside me
I had the deer browsing on my heart,
This was my mother, and I had the dirt
Inside was well with the green well of love,
Outside privation, poverty, all dearth
Thus like the pearl I came from hurt,
Like the prize pig I came from love

Now I know what was wanting in my youth,
It was not water or a loving mouth
It was what makes the apple-tree grow big,
The mountain fall, and the minnow die
It was hard cash I needed at my root
I now know that how I grew was due
To echoing guts and the empty bag—
My song was out of tune for a few notes

Oh, my ghost cried, the charming chimes of coincidence!
I was born also there, where distress collects the rents
Guttersnipe gutless, I was planted in your guts there,
The tear of time my sperm I rose from
The woe-womb of the want-raped mind,
Empty hunger cracked with stomach's thunder
Remember the rags that flattered your frame
Froze hard and formed this flesh my mind

So close over the chapter of my birth,
Blessed by distress, baptized by dearth
How I swung myself from the tree's bough
Demonstrating death in my gay play
How the germ of the sperm of this ghost like a worm
I caught from the cold comfort of never enough
How by being miserable for myself I began,
And now am miserable for the mass of man

GEORGE BARKER

A PAUPER

and the children's teeth shall be set on edge

I SEE him old, trapped in a burly house
Cold in the angry spitting of a rain
Come down these sixty years

Why vehemently
Astride the threshold do I wait, marking
The ice softly pendent on his broken temple?
Upon the silence I cast the mesh of rancor

By which the gentler convergences of the flesh
Scatter untokened, mercilessly estopped

Why so illegal these tears ?

The year's incertitude and
The dirty white fates trickling
Blackly down the necessary years
Define no attitude to the present winter,
No mood to the cold matter

(I remember my mother, my mother,
A stiff wind halted outside,
On the inner ear my country
Was a far shore crying
With invisible seas)

When tomorrow pleads the mortal decision
Sifting rankly out of time's sieve today,
No words differently will be uttered
Nor stuttered, like sheep astray

A pauper in the swift denominating
Of a bald cliff with a proper name, having words
As strumpets only, I cannot beat off
Invincible modes of the sea, hearing

Be a man my son by God

He turned again
To the purring jet yellowing the murder story,
Deaf to the measured pathos of the air

ALLEN TATE

WINTER OFFERING

ALL I can offer now is a cracked china jug
Of water, and, grown with tedious sweat and toil,
Potatoes from the back-garden clods dug,
Cut with the blunt spade-edge, clogged with heavy soil

I wish I could give you apples, grapes and pears,
I wish I could give you cider and sour wine
But the orchard has been rank and green for years
And its fruit won't ripen without sunshine

Potatoes cement bone, keep body and soul together
Water costs nothing and will do for the present
It's difficult enough to be gay in this wretched weather
Without useless regrets for living like a peasant

We'll make no virtue of enforced economy,
Strike no impressive plaster or tin attitudes
Poverty's fixed, archaic physiognomy
Projects only through masks where nothing else extrudes

D S SAVAGE

THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

THE hunchback in the park
A solitary mister
Propped between trees and water
From the opening of the garden lock

That let the trees and water enter
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark,

Eating bread from a newspaper
Drinking water from the chained cup
That the children filled with gravel
In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship
Slept at night in a dog kennel
But nobody chained him up

Like the park birds he came early
Like the water he sat down
And Mister they called hey mister
The truant boys from the town
Running when he had heard them clearly
On out of sound

Past lake and rockery
Laughing when he shook his paper
Hunchbacked in mockery
Through the loud zoo of the willow groves
Dodging the park keeper
With his stick that picked up leaves

And the old dog sleeper
Alone between nurses and swans
While the boys among willows
Made the tiger jump out of their eyes
To roar on the rockery stones
And the groves were blue with sailors

Made all day until bell time
A woman figure without fault
Straight as a young elm
Straight and tall from his crooked bones

That she might stand in the night
After the lock and chains

All night in the unmade park
After the railings and shrubberies
The birds the grass the trees the lake
Had followed the hunchback
And the wild boys innocent as strawberries
To his kennel in the dark

DYLAN THOMAS

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth,

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference

ROBERT FROST

OGRES AND PYGMIES

THOSE famous men of old, the Ogres—
They had long beards and stinking arm-pits
They were wide-mouthed, long-yarded and great-bellied
Yet of not taller stature, Sirs, than you
They lived on Ogre-Strand, which was no place
But the churl's terror of their proud extent,
Where every foot was three-and-thirty inches,
And every penny bought a whole sheep
Now of their company none survive, not one,
The times being, thank God, unfavourable
To all but nightmare memory of them
Their images stand howling in the waste,
(The winds enforced against their wide mouths)
Whose granite haunches king and priest must yearly
Buss, and their cold knobbed knees

So many feats they did to admiration
With their enormous lips they sang louder
Than ten cathedral choirs, and with their grand yards
Stormed the most rare and obstinate maidenheads,
With their strong-gutted and capacious bellies
Digested stones and glass like ostriches

They dug great pits and heaped great cairns,
Deflected rivers, slew whole armies,
And hammered judgments for posterity—
For the sweet-cupid-lipped and tassel-yarded
Delicate-stomached dwellers
In Pygmy Alley, where with brooding on them
A foot is shrunk to seven inches
And twelve-pence will not buy a spare rib
And who would choose between Ogres and Pygmies—
The thundering text, the snivelling commentary—
Reading between such covers he will likely
Prove his own disproportion and not laugh

ROBERT GRAVES

MISSING DATES

SLOWLY the poison the whole blood stream fills
It is not the effort nor the failure tires
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills

It is not your system or clear sight that mills
Down small to the consequence a life requires,
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills

They bled an old dog dry yet the exchange rills
Of young dog blood gave but a month's desires,
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills

It is the Chinese tombs and the slag hills
Usurp the soil, and not the soil retires
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills

Not to have fire is to be a skin that shrills
The complete fire is death From partial fires
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills

It is the poems you have lost, the ills
From missing dates, at which the heart expires
Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills
The waste remains, the waste remains and kills

WILLIAM EMPSON

NO WORST, THERE IS NONE PITCHED PAST PITCH OF GRIEF

No worst, there is none Pitched past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?
My cries heave, herds-long, huddle in a main, a chief
Woe, world-sorrow, on an age-old anvil wince and sing—
Then lull, then leave off Fury had shrieked “No ling-
ering! Let me be fell force I must be brief”

O the mind, mind has mountains, cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

AS IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE THERE IS ROOM

As in the midst of battle there is room
For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth,
As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth
Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom,
As in the crevices of Cæsar's tomb
The sweet herbs flourish on a little earth
So in this great disaster of our birth
We can be happy, and forget our doom

For morning, with a ray of tenderest joy
Gilding the iron heaven, hides the truth,
And evening gently woos us to employ
Our grief in idle catches Such is youth,
Till from that summer's trance we wake, to find
Despair before us, vanity behind

GEORGE SANTAYANA

ODE

WHY will they never sleep
Those great women who sit
Peering at me with parrot eyes?
They sit with grave knees, they keep
Perpetual stare, and their hands move
As though hands could be aware—
Forward and back, to begin again—
As though on tumultuous shuttles of wind they wove
Shrouds out of air

The three are sisters There is one
Who sits divine in weeping stone
On a small chair of skeleton
And is most inescapable
I have walked through many mirrors
But always accompanied
I have been as many men, as many ghosts
As there were days The boy was seen
Always at rainfall, mistily, not lost
I have tried changing shapes
But always, alone, I have heard
Her shadow coming nearer, and known
The awful grasp of striding hands
Goddess! upon
The screaming metamorphosis

One has a face burned hard
As the red Cretan clay,
Who wears a white torso scarred
With figures like a calendar
She sits among broken shafts
Of stone, she is and still will be,
Who feeds on cities, gods and men,
Weapons of bronze and curious ornaments,
Reckoning the evens as the odds
Her least movement recalls the sea

The last has idiot teeth
And a brow not made
For any thought but suffering
Tired, she repeats
In idiot singing
A song shaped like a ring
"Now is now and never Then
Dead Virgins will bear no men

And now that we speak of love, of love,
The woman's beneath
That's burdened with love
And the man's above
While the thing is done and done
One is one and Three is three
Children may come from a spark in the sun
But One is one and never Three
And never a Virgin shall bear a Son
While the shadow lasts of the gray ashtree!"
Phantasmal marbles!
There was One who might have saved
Me from these grave dissolute stones
And parrot eyes But He is dead,
Christ is dead And in a grave
Dark as a sightless skull He lies
And of His bones are charnels made

JOHN PEALE BISHOP

RICHARD CORY

WHENEVER Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked,
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked

And he was rich—yes richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace

In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread,
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

TIRED AND UNHAPPY

TIRED and unhappy, you think of houses
Soft-carpeted and warm in the December evening,
While snow's white pieces fall past the window,
And the orange firelight leaps

A young girl sings
That song of Gluck where Orpheus pleads with Death,
Her elders watch, nodding their happiness
To see time fresh again in her self-conscious eyes
The servants bring the coffee, the children retire,
Elder and younger yawn and go to bed,
The coals fade and glow, rose and ashen,
It is time to shake yourself! and break this
Banal dream, and turn your head
Where the underground is charged, where the weight
Of the lean buildings is seen,
Where close in the subway rush, anonymous
In the audience, well-dressed or mean,
So many surround you, ringing your fate,
Caught in an anger exact as a machine!

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

LE MONOCLE DE MON ONCLE

I

"MOTHER of heaven, regina of the clouds,
O sceptre of the sun, crown of the moon,
There is not nothing, no, no, never nothing,
Like the clashed edges of two words that kill "
And so I mocked her in magnificent measure
Or was it that I mocked myself alone ?
I wish that I might be a thinking stone
The sea of spuming thought foists up again
The radiant bubble that she was And then
A deep up-pouring from some saltier well
Within me, bursts its watery syllable

II

A red bird flies across the golden floor
It is a red bird that seeks out his choir
Among the choirs of wind and wet and wing
A torrent will fall from him when he finds
Shall I uncrumple this much-crumpled thing ?
I am a man of fortune greeting heirs,
For it has come that thus I greet the Spring
These choirs of welcome choir for me farewell
No Spring can follow past meridian
Yet you persist with anecdotal bliss
To make believe a starry *connaissance*

III

Is it for nothing, then, that old Chinese
Sat titivating by their mountain pools

Or in the Yangtse studied out their beards ?
I shall not play the flat historic scale
You know how Utamaro's beauties sought
The end of love in their all-speaking braids
You know the mountainous coiffures of Bath
Alas ! Have all the barbers lived in vain
That not one curl in Nature has survived ?
Why, without pity on these studious ghosts,
Do you come dripping in your hair from sleep ?

IV

This luscious and impeccable fruit of life
Falls, it appears, of its own weight to earth
When you were Eve, its acrid juice was sweet,
Untasted, in its heavenly, orchard air—
An apple serves as well as any skull
To be the book in which to read a round,
And is as excellent, in that it is composed
Of what, like skulls, comes rotting back to ground
But it excels in this, that as the fruit
Of love, it is a book too mad to read
Before one merely reads to pass the time

V

In the high West there burns a furious star
It is for fiery boys that star was set
And for sweet-smelling virgins close to them
The measure of the intensity of love
The measure of the intensity of love
For me, the firefly's quick, electric stroke
Ticks tediously the time of one more year
And you ? Remember how the crickets came
Out of their mother grass, like little kin

In the pale nights, when your first imagery
Found inklings of your bond to all that dust

VI

If men at forty will be painting lakes
The ephemeral blues must merge for them in one,
The basic slate, the universal hue
There is a substance in us that prevails
But in our amours amorists discern
Such fluctuations that their scrivening
Is breathless to attend each quirky turn
When amorists grow bald, then amours shrink
Into the compass and curriculum
Of introspective exiles, lecturing
It is a theme for Hyacinth alone

VII

The mules that angels ride come slowly down
The blazing passes, from beyond the sun
Descensions of their tinkling bells arrive
These muleteers are dainty of their way
Meantime centurions guffaw and beat
Their shrilling tankards on the table-boards
This parable, in sense, amounts to this
The honey of heaven may or may not come,
But that of earth both comes and goes at once
Suppose these couriers brought amid their train
A damsel heightened by eternal bloom

VIII

Like a dull scholar, I behold, in love,
An ancient aspect touching a new mind

It comes, it blooms, it bears its fruit and dies
This trivial trope reveals a way of truth
Our bloom is gone We are the fruit thereof
Two golden gourds distended on our vines,
Into the Autumn weather, splashed with frost,
Distorted by hale fatness, turned grotesque
We hang like warty squashes, streaked and rayed,
The laughing sky will see the two of us
Washed into rinds by rotting winter rains

IX

In verses wild with motion, full of din,
Loudened by cries, by clashes, quick and sure
As the deadly thought of men accomplishing
Their curious fates in war, come, celebrate
The faith of forty, ward of Cupido
Most venerable heart, the lustiest concert
Is not too lusty for your broadening
I quiz all sounds, all thoughts, all everything
For the music and manner of the paladins
To make oblation fit Where shall I find
Bravura adequate to this great hymn?

X

The fops of fancy in their poems leave
Memorabilia of the mystic spouts,
Spontaneously watering their gritty soils
I am a yeoman, as such fellows go
I know no magic trees, no balmy boughs,
No silver-ruddy, gold-vermilion fruits
But, after all, I know a tree that bears
A semblance to the thing I have in mind
It stands gigantic, with a certain tip

To which all birds come sometime in their time
But when they go that tip still tips the tree

XI

If sex were all, then every trembling hand
Could make us squeak, like dolls, the wished-for words
But note the unconscionable treachery of fate,
That makes us weep, laugh, grunt and groan, and shout
Doleful heroics, pinching gestures forth
From madness or delight, without regard
To that first foremost law Anguishing hour!
Last night, we sat beside a pool of pink,
Clipped with lilacs, scudding the bright chromes,
Keen to the point of starlight, while a frog
Boomed from his very belly, odious chords

XII

A blue pigeon it is, that circles the blue sky,
On side-long wing, around and round and round
A white pigeon it is, that flutters to the ground,
Grown tired of flight Like a dark rabbi, I
Observed, when young, the nature of mankind,
In lordly study Every day, I found
Man proved a gobbet in my mincing world
Like a rose rabbi, later, I pursued,
And still pursue, the origin and course
Of love, but until now I never knew
That fluttering things have so distinct a shade

WALLACE STEVENS

BEATA L'ALMA

Beata l'alma, ove non corre tempo

MICHELANGELO

I

TIME ends when vision sees its lapse in
liberty The seven
sleepers quit their den and wild
lament-
ations fill out voiceless bodies Echoes only are
You will never understand the mind's
misanthropy, nor see
that all is foul and fit to
screech in
It is an eye's anarchy men are ghoulish stumps
and the air a river of opaque
filth God! I cannot see
to design these stark reaches, these
bulging
contours pressed against me in the maddening dark
A blindman's buff and no distilling
of song for the woeful
scenes of agony Never
will rest
the mind an instant in its birdlike flutterings
Could I impress my voice on the plas-
tic darkness, or lift an
inviolable lanthorn from
a ship
in the storm I might have ease But why? No
fellows

would answer my hullallo, and my
lanthorn would lurch on the
mast till it dipped under the
wet waves
'and the hissing darkness healed the wide wound of
light

A cynic race—to bleak ecstasies
we are driven by our
sombre destiny Men's shouts
are not
glad enough to echo in our groin'd hearts We know
war and its dead, and famine's bleach'd bones,
black rot overreaching
the silent pressure of life
in fronds
of green ferns and in the fragile shell of white flesh

2

New children must be born of gods in
a deathless land, where the
uneroded rocks bound clear
from cool
glassy tarns, and no flaw is in mind or flesh

Sense and image they must refashion—
they will not recreate
love love ends in hate, they will
not use
words words lie The structure of events alone is
comprehensible and to single
perceptions communic-

ation is not essential
Art ends,
the individual world alone is valid

and that gives ease The water is still,
the rocks are hard and vein'd,
metalliferous, yielding
an ore
of high worth In the sky the unsullied sun lake

HERBERT READ

ROSES ONLY

You do not seem to realize that beauty is a liability rather
than an asset—that in view of the fact that spirit creates
form we are justified in supposing
that you must have brains For you, a symbol of the
unit, stiff and sharp,
conscious of surpassing by dint of native superiority
and liking for everything
self-dependent, anything an

ambitious civilization might produce for you, unaided,
to attempt through sheer
reserve, to confuse presumptions resulting from observation,
is idle You cannot make us
think you a delightful happen-so But rose, if you
are brilliant, it
is not because your petals are the without-which-nothing
of pre-eminence Would you not, minus
thorns, be a what-is-this, a mere

peculiarity? They are not proof against a worm, the elements, or mildew,
but what about the predatory hand? What is brilliance without co-ordination? Guarding the infinitesimal pieces of your mind, compelling audience to
the remark that it is better to be forgotten than to be remembered too violently,
your thorns are the best part of you

MARIANNE MOORE

NOON ON ALAMEDA STREET

SUN, when it shines on traffic, has a look
Of loaded radiance that might explode,
Yet keeps its kindle like a meaning known
Only to motors in the city road,

Only to fury lifted of all horns
Mourning to themselves a thing to come,
For we have heard delirium in a claxon,
Seen revelation lit on chromium

On Alameda Street the earth is turning
Secret among old sluices and their kind
The voice of men among machines at noon
Comes like a sigh from history to the mind,

For in this noon there is no light like light,
(Oh, tell us, dark on asphalt, of the sun)
But brightness spawning upon dirty glass,
But fever smoking at meridian,

But men and women riding in their graves
With hands upon a wheel they cannot keep
Clear in the rapt confusion of the crowd,
Crowd and the fate of motion and of sleep

HILDEGARDE FLANNER

IN TIME OF
"THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

I

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass,
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die

THOMAS HARDY

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I WENT to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

ON HEARING A SYMPHONY OF BEETHOVEN

SWEET sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease!
Reject me not into the world again
With you alone is excellence and peace,
Mankind made plausible, his purpose plain

MUSIC OF COLOURS—WHITE BLOSSOM

WHITE blossom, white, white shell, the Nazarene
Walking in the ear, white touched by souls
Who know the music by which white is seen,
Blinding white, from strings and aureoles,
Until that is not white, seen at the two poles,
Nor white the Scythian hills, nor Marlowe's queen

The spray looked white until this snowfall
Now the foam is grey, the wave is dull
Call nothing white again, we were deceived
The flood of Noah dies, the rainbow is lived
Yet from the deluge of illusions an unknown colour is
saved

White must die black, to be born white again
From the womb of sounds, the inscrutable grain,
From the crushed, dark fibre, breaking in pain

The bud of the apple is already forming there
The cherry-bud, too, is firm, and behind it the pear
Conspires with the racing cloud I shall not look
The rainbow is diving through the wide-open book
Past the rustling paper of birch, the sorceries of bark

Buds in April, on the waiting branch,
Starrily opening, light raindrops drench,
Swinging from world to world when starlings sweep,
Where they alight in air, are white asleep
They will not break, not break, until you say
White is not white again, nor may may

White flowers die soonest, die into that chaste
Bride-bed of the moon, their lives laid waste
Lilies of Solomon, taken by the gust,
Sigh, make way And the dark forest
Haunts the lowly crib near Solomon's dust,
Rocked to the end of majesty, warmed by the low beast,
Locked in the liberty of his tremendous rest

If there is white, or has been white, it must have been
When His eyes looked down and made the leper clean
White will not be, apart, though the trees try
Spirals of blossom, their green conspiracy
She who touched His garment saw no white tree

Lovers speak of Venus, and the white doves,
Jubilant, the white girl, myth's whiteness, Jove's,
Of Leda, the swan, whitest of his loves
Lust imagines him, web-footed Jupiter, great down
Of thundering light, love's yearning pulls him down
On the white swan-breast, the magical lawn,
Involved in plumage, mastered by the veins of dawn

In the churchyard the yew is neither green nor black
I know nothing of Earth or colour until I know I lack
Original white, by which the ravishing bird looks wan
The mound of dust is nearer, white of mute dust that
dies

In the soundfall's great light, the music in the eyes,
Transfiguring whiteness into shadows gone,
Utterly secret I know you, black swan

VERNON WATKINS

THE IMAGINARY ICEBERG

WE'D rather have the iceberg than the ship,
Although it meant the end of travel
Although it stood stock still like cloudy rock
And all the sea were moving marble
We'd rather have the iceberg than the ship,
We'd rather own this breathing plain of snow
Though the ship's sails were laid upon the sea
As the snow lies undissolved upon the water
O solemn, floating field,
Are you aware an iceberg takes repose
With you, and when it wakes may pasture on your
snows ?

This is a scene a sailor'd give his eyes for
The ship's ignored The iceberg rises
And sinks again, its glassy pinnacles
Correct elliptics in the sky
This is a scene where he who treads the boards
Is artlessly rhetorical The curtain
Is light enough to rise on finest ropes
That airy twists of snow provide
The wits of these white peaks
Spar with the sun Its weight the iceberg dares
Upon a shifting stage and stands and stares

This iceberg cuts its facets from within
Like jewelry from a grave
It saves itself perpetually and adorns
Only itself, perhaps the snows
Which so surprise us lying on the sea
Goodbye, we say, goodbye, the ship steers off

Where waves give in to one another's waves
And clouds run in a warmer sky
Icebergs behooove the soul
(Both being self-made from elements least visible)
To see them so fleshed, fair, erected indivisible

ELIZABETH BISHOP

THE HAND THAT SIGNED THE PAPER FELLED A CITY

THE hand that signed the paper felled a city,
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country,
These five kings did a king to death

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,
The finger joints are cramped with chalk,
A goose's quill has put an end to murder
That put an end to talk

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,
And famine grew, and locusts came,
Great is the hand that holds dominion over
Man by a scribbled name

The five kings count the dead but do not soften
The crusted wound nor pat the brow;
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven,
Hands have no tears to flow

DYLAN THOMAS

TWO TRAMPS IN MUD TIME

OUT of the mud two strangers came
And caught me splitting wood in the yard
And one of them put me off my aim
By hailing cheerily "Hit them hard!"
I knew pretty well why he dropped behind
And let the other go on a way
I knew pretty well what he had in mind
He wanted to take my job for pay

Good blocks of beech it was I split,
As large around as the chopping block,
And every piece I squarely hit
Fell splinterless as a cloven rock
The blows that a life of self-control
Spares to strike for the common good
That day, giving a loose to my soul,
I spent on ~~the~~ unimportant wood

The sun was warm but the wind was chill
You know how it is with an April day
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May
But if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March

A bluebird comes tenderly up to alight
And fronts the wind to unruffle a plume,
His song so pitched as not to excite
A single flower as yet to bloom

It is snowing a flake and he half knew
Winter was only playing possum
Except in color he isn't blue,
But he wouldn't advise a thing to blossom

The water for which we may have to look
In summertime with a witching-wand,
In every wheelrut's now a brook,
In every print of a hoof a pond
Be glad of water, but don't forget
The lurking frost in the earth beneath
That will steal forth after the sun is set
And show on the water its crystal teeth

The time when most I loved my task
These two must make me love it more
By coming with what they came to ask
You'd think I never had felt before
The weight of an ax-head poised aloft,
The grip on earth of outspread feet,
The life of muscles rocking soft
And smooth and moist in vernal heat

Out of the woods two hulking tramps
(From sleeping God knows where last night,
But not long since in the lumber camps)
They thought all chopping was theirs of right
Men of the woods and lumberjacks,
- They judged me by their appropriate tool
Except as a fellow handled an ax
They had no way of knowing a fool

Nothing on either side was said
They knew they had but to stay their stay
And all their logic would fill my head
As that I had no right to play

With what was another man's work for gain
My right might be love but theirs was need
And where the two exist in twain
Theirs was the better right—agreed

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes

ROBERT FROST

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

*God made man in His own image
In the image of God made He him*

—GENESIS

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land,
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power,
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And markt their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look,
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop,
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Powers that made the world,
A protest that is also prophecy

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape,
Touch it again with immortality,
Give back the upward looking and the light,
Rebuild in it the music and the dream,
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

EDWIN MARKHAM

FACTORY WINDOWS ARE ALWAYS BROKEN

FACTORY windows are always broken
Somebody's always throwing bricks,
Somebody's always heaving cinders,
Playing ugly Yahoo tricks

Factory windows are always broken
Other windows are let alone
No one throws through the chapel-window
The bitter, snarling derisive stone

Factory windows are always broken
Something or other is going wrong
Something is rotten—I think, in Denmark
End of the factory-window song

VACHEL LINDSAY

THE LEADEN-EYED

LET not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed
Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
Not that they die, but that they die like sheep

VACHEL LINDSAY

THE CITY

CHILDREN of the cold sun and the broken horizon,
O secret faces, multitudes, eyes of inscrutable grief,
great breath of millions, in unknown crowds or alone,
rooms of dreamers above the cement abyss,—and I,
who all night restive in the unsleeping rain,
awoke and saw the windows covered with tears

I heard, like the noise of melting rivers, the concourse of
the living
all hours mingled, violent, murmuring, or bright
the cheers the radio, the metal shriek of the accident,
the whisper of hired affection, hit of the week,
applause, gunfire on the screen, and at night the tragic
houses
issuing like voluble flame the outcries of the city

Yet none pronounced the truth, no hand disclosed
the heartbreak behind the muted door, denying all
I longed to read letters therefore which were never sent,
to pierce walls, covers, silences, part the sad lips,
to stand by warm bed and witness the instantaneous
dream,
put my hand in men's foreheads and clasp the beating
spring

The girl in the park cried *Juan' Juan'* but it was not I
None answered, but I felt the breath of unknowable love
Dawn silent an old woman climbed with dry hands
the iron stoop where her daughter feared to give birth
None spoke, but waited to watch the discolored twins
drawn forth,
wrapped on the bed, together, born to the extremes of
neglect

Light on the painful eyelids, agony of beginnings,
the assault naked against the edges of the world,
then the long childhood inexplicably kind or cruel,
the boy fingering himself, the flush and the blind pulse,
the maiden touching the first blood of sex,
still ignorant of desire, the double wilderness

Life smiles with heavy breast her children run
forward with shouts, hunger, the impulse of free affection,
but each gets punished for his open face, each falls
twisted, twisted returns, gets dreaded blow, and turns
back screaming into that room at last, into himself
obscure, restful with lonely forces, like the sea

The young return,—but cold, with skin-tight mask,
seeing this city honors most the false

the lady behind glass, untouched by human hand,
with plaster pubis, thigh and docile belly
lifting the admired fabric up for sale,—
while the living long to wear her enameled eyes

Within is dearer merchandise men and numbered words
cold, vehement, or admiring, as the price demands,
where the painter hangs for sale beside his work,
the critic, the peddler, and the smiling acrobat,
toady and plagiarist for the price of one,
and a masked surgeon offering jars of happiness

The sheen, the glamour, and the marvelous fanfare,
the alluring neon and the porcelain smile,
the arranged caress of furs, the forearm blazing with
dollars,
the headlines bought in advance for the subnormal
beauty,
and all life long the shoppers with laboring hearts
desire and possess at last the corpse in cellophane

O lost people! O vendors of desperate myths!
Who prints the cold path of stars that promise voyages?
Who markets the daydream to the tubercular,
puts obscene clothing on the frigid wife,
makes woman its soft automaton, and man its bed,
and brands the false face on the living flesh of the child?

I read the smooth journals, but they gave no news of
this
Who rents the cells of this city? Whom shall I learn to
kill?

The mysterious pencil? The dealer in abstract food?
Or past the chrome-steel and the politeness of corridors,
with row of buttons summoning tears or flattery,
at his old powerful desk, the immaculate imbecile?

As I walked on the glossy avenue, and with morose fire
thought the immense proud fraudulence to vivisect,
I heard the derision and the girls' duet of laughter
of two who stopped before me with flaunting hair,
insulting the photo of the noted man,
who, finger in his printed cheek, could not reply

All three we drank together, mentioning love,
delights, friends, quick passion, and the fine pale sky
So rapid cognac glittered in our heads,
while I to each gave sumptuous years, to one
her house with windows full of the green sea light,
and foretold one to have love wherever she goes

And late, after the headlong passage of first desire,
now two alone, we lay awake in murmuring ease,
and spoke again of happiness, and of the elan of flight,
and as outdoors the high branch yielding to invisible air,
so she to her wish to learn the touch of that wind,
hold motor, and ride on the immeasurable gestures of
space

Night dwindling, from how many tranquil hands, white
morning extends the beautiful directions of the world,
luminous chasms, city of vertical south, north,
upward, dark march of windows, inlaid each by that
star
softening with precious light in streams of dawn
toward the close court, the black leap, and the suicide's
open eye

Like a fall forward into time too fast, is death,
springing in each the coil of irreversible years
the lymph and architecture of the self,

unique delirium, lust, and dreams of lightning,
the body remembered in luscious movement or at ease,
names lost forever, and childhood of wonderful snow

Knees broken backward, refugees from life,
leaving behind the houses they have lived in,
the sweat on the walls, the toilet, the hateful embrace,
the colored mottoes and the step of the insane son,
or failure driving like point of dynamite into the heart
lifelong, till they escape across the impossible sill

O space that lifts the monoplane strong did suck them
down,
this act upon this stone, and shadows on it of living
people,
noon, and dark twilight, and night with argon peaks,
matchless city, terrible, and I cried aloft
what monster, O what monstrous foot
here trod, leaving in blood the measure of its corruption ?

Here the strict labor of the many must support
the monotony of the useless, and luxury is got
with smiles, false kindness, marriage, or embezzlement,
he who can feign desire, praise poison, or hang by his
teeth,
lives well, accumulates the powerful bond,
receives inhuman honor,—but the kind man is strangled

Vaulting metropolis, under whose diagrams of eloquent
light
wrestle decay and energy, both blind,—
I went in your purest hours, and met with friends,
some with familiar calm, or gay, or drunk in the bright
rooms,

but I heard the terrifying pulse of other selves
on the face of each I touched unknown the invisible tear

In the membranes of the skull there lie in millionfold
powers and memories, and I find them forth
often the deep smile, and the simple day at the zoo,
the voices over the bay, the avowal, and the window with
leaves,
the joint of the thigh of the beloved person,
and the wish to live calmly on the highest level

Yet who is it crawls on the subway's iron floor to sing
where all must give or listen, since the door is shut?
O in the proud mirrors of the brain, the ugly clerk
I see is myself! and the murderer trapped on the fire-
escape,
and the desperate salesman, the thief, and the sick girl
bought and awakened
to open herself again to the stranger's thrust

I see a boy's hand move as pale as glass,
and women sleeping with infinite eyes, and all, all
I see are innocent, not walls, nor men
brutal, remote, stunned, querulous, weak, or cold
do crimes so massive, but the hideous fact
stands guilty the usurpation of man over man

Thus in the grating rack and torsion of society,
the inmost being cracks, gulfs there with groaning cliffs
disfigure hope, and secret fires grow, and chasms
unknown hold paralyzed the maelstroms of love, despair
with frigid pinnacles, hatred, silent catastrophes,
crevasses of self the self dares not discover,—

Between the inner and the outer face,
between the cold palm and the incestuous mind,
between the thought, the pleasure, and the indifference,
between the bright talk and the solitude,
between the oratory and the massacre,
between the music and the soundless scream

BEN MADDOW

THE IMITATION OF FAUST

WHILE I, here in this rented room, under
The hooded lamp, squeeze my brains,
Exhaust the battery of my eyes
And drain the fuel of my veins,
The night is rocked with thunder
The unexpected violent summer storm
Draws me to the window where
I watch the rain boil in gutters,
Steam as it sucks down sewers
Tonight the murderer is abroad
And the stranger is doped in the sailor's den
Tonight, beneath the chandeliers
While I grow hunchbacked in a world of men,
The tall women move in their atmospheres
Shall I make this art my mephistopheles,
Conjure cars, success, women from it?
Thunder and lightning! and while
My backstage angel sings
I'll walk my simple devil from the wings
And like the restless scholar made invisible
Enter the hazards of actual lives

Then come, the night is going
We will be late for supper in the reserved suite
Enter with the apologetic waiter
Who enters with the hot tray and the smoking meat
The orders are we are not to be disturbed
We too have sent the orchids with the witty note,
Enclosed the rope of pearls in the candy box,
Those pearls that pulse now at the basin of her throat
Mark this man he is dangerous
And at his gesture trips are cancelled, fortunes undone,
The bride deserted on the honeymoon bed
Is this the coveted world you came to admire?
The perfect teeth a world of cripples envies,
The barbered jowls above the correct attire?
Mark him closer
Though he stirs the demitasse with an engraved spoon
How shall he feel secure
Whose universe is founded on what his stocks will do at
noon?
What friend shall he trust when a bribe has bought
friends?
What woman when a fur has bought women?
Chromium, sleeping powders, the private car,
None of these shall avail him in the insomniac night
When, turning in the darkness toward the butler's room,
He sees himself a falling meteor

Meanwhile continue, since you must know it all
Stand behind the gambler at the green table,
Intense and weary with the long play
He winces at the ace that passes him,
The jack needed and the queen drawn
Night thins and washes into day
And cold and cramped he deals into the dawn
Upstairs at the private theatre party

The company is waiting for the first reviews
The young author leans against the cocktail table
Whether he will be a failure or a famous man tomorrow
The *Times* will tell him or the morning *News*
Nevertheless the blonde who hangs upon his arm,
The ambitious understudy in the show,
Is banking heavily on the play's success,
And now she has a playwright, will not let him go
Down the hall the retired couple
Living on their dividends, spend an evening home,
Mother with her knitting, Father with the radio
John writes from Cleveland the family's fine
And Sue's marine she did at college is hanging on the
wall

The world is ordered to an obvious Methodist design
And God, with a slight Peoria accent, hovers over all
The suburban emperor orders his evening papers and his
pills

The potted plants shadow the faces in the main salon
But the elderly attendant in the tiled lavatory below
In the small morning hours talks with Christ
As the bell captain planning a racetrack kill,
Desiring the grandeur of the royal suite,
Delivers the pint of scotch and the water, iced

Now bring me the Helen of my desire
Though I have searched the cabins of luxury liners,
Sought her on the observation roof among the clouds,
Shall I find her tonight perhaps among these diners,
Lounging in the cocktail lounge,
Or when the theatres empty their late crowds?
I shall have boys deliver baskets of flowers
I shall call the desk and tell them not to ring
When shall I hear her step upon the stair?
For I have followed her through revolving doors,

Through doors that opened by an electric eye,
And when the music was loudest in the pit,
And when the loges called obscenely to the stage,
Her face was there and I desired it
She will make me forget all humiliation
And cancel the disappointments I have known
For when she moves the Mediterranean is bluer
And I shall kiss her palms and upturned feet
And on her eyelids weigh my heavy mouth
Until the night is filled with tropical guitars
And winds from Florida blow through this northern
room

And fruit falls in all the orchards of the south

Back And the storm dying From where I came
The batik nailed over the bed The private letters with
my name

The hour approaches, that hour
When the heart is emptiest and when fears
Of failure and our own incompetence destroy us
In that hour the devil that served us reappears
Then pace the rug in the parlor Turn the radio on
Envy those who are not curious about heaven or hell,
Envy those who are not asked to bring back grapes in
winter

They are decent, they pay their debts, their sons are
strong,

Though at night their catarrhs rattle in their throats,
While I, uncertain of the world where I belong,
Examining the heavens for a secret sign,
Inviting to dinner the outcast scholars and the dead,
Wait for the malevolent voice I know so well,
Wait for the appointed hour to strike
The trapdoor opens slowly and I scream at sight of hell

ALFRED HAYES

THE SLAUGHTER-HOUSE

UNDER the big 500-watted lamps, in the huge sawdusted
government inspected slaughter-house,
head down from hooks and clamps, run on trolleys over
troughs,
the animals die
Whatever terror their dull intelligences feel
or what agony distorts their most protruding eyes
the incommunicable narrow skulls conceal
Across the sawdusted floor,
ignorant as children, they see the butcher's slow
methodical approach
in the bloodied apron, leather cap above, thick square
shoes below,
struggling to comprehend this unique vision upside down,
and then approximate a human scream
as from the throat slit like a letter
the blood empties, and the windpipe, like a blown valve,
spurts steam

But I, sickened equally with the ox and lamb,
misread my fate,
mistake the butcher's love
who kills me for the meat I am
to feed a hungry multitude beyond the sliding doors
I, too, misjudge the real
purpose of this huge shed I'm herded in not for my love
or lovely wool am I here,
but to make some world a meal
See, how on the unsubstantial air
I kick, bleating my private woe,
as upside down my rolling sight

somersaults, and frantically I try to set my world upright,
too late learning why I'm hung here,
whose nostrils bleed, whose life runs out from eye and ear

ALFRED HAYES

THE YACHTS

contend in a sea which the land partly encloses
shielding them from the too heavy blows
of an ungoverned ocean which when it chooses

tortures the biggest hulls, the best man knows
to pit against its beating, and sinks them pitilessly
Mothlike in mists, scintillant in the minute

brilliance of cloudless days, with broad bellying sails
they glide to the wind tossing green water
from their sharp prows while over them the crew crawls

ant-like, solicitously grooming them, releasing,
making fast as they turn, lean far over and having
caught the wind again, side by side, head for the mark

In a well guarded arena of open water surrounded by
lesser and greater craft which, sycophant, lumbering
and fluttering follow them, they appear youthful, rare

as the light of a happy eye, live with the grace
of all that in the mind is feckless, free and
naturally to be desired Now the sea which holds them

is moody, lapping their glossy sides, as if feeling
for some slightest flaw but fails completely
Today no race Then the wind comes again The yachts

move, jockeying for a start, the signal is set and they
are off Now the waves strike at them but they are too
well made, they slip through, though they take in canvas

Arms with hands grasping seek to clutch at the prows
Bodies thrown recklessly in the way are cut aside
It is a sea of faces about them in agony, in despair

until the horror of the race dawns staggering the mind,
the whole sea become an entanglement of watery bodies
lost to the world bearing what they cannot hold Broken,

beaten, desolate, reaching from the dead to be taken up
they cry out, failing, failing! their cries rising
in waves still as the skillful yachts pass over

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

THE GOLF LINKS

THE golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The laboring children can look out
And see the men at play

SARAH N CLEGHORN

THE SERF

His naked skin clothed in the torrid mist
That puffs in smoke around the patient hooves,
The ploughman drives, a slow somnambulist,
And through the green his crimson furrow grooves
His heart, more deeply than he wounds the plain,
Long by the rasping share of insult torn,
Red clod, to which the war-cry once was rain
And tribal spears the fatal sheaves of corn,
Lies fallow now But as the turf divides
I see in the slow progress of his strides
Over the toppled clods and falling flowers,
The timeless, surely patience of the self
That moves the nearest to the naked earth
And ploughs down palaces, and thrones, and towers

ROY CAMPBELL

NOTES FOR A BESTIARY

(On many farms around large cities the pigs are fed on refuse from hotels and restaurants The smallest piece of their own flesh is enough to cause a disease which renders them un-marketable)

I HATE the cunning mantis, lean, mimetic,
punning on the word prey Overemphatic
subtlety's distasteful Give me
the clean transparent pig

He's no economist—doesn't care a grunt
for the marginal cost of bacon But his nicety can't
tolerate cannibalism he learns
his own taste, gets worms

For man, thrusting his offal in the trusting snout,
lays a depth-charge of disease, then hangs round
as aerial convoy Pig
perishes in smoke and fog

The cost of bacon rises, ham is dear
the nicety of pigs had made the poor
hungry Warlords storm,
boards talk,
halls roar,
while man kills man and eats him as before

TERENCE HEYWOOD

WHITE CHRISTMAS

PUNCTUALLY at Christmas the soft plush
Of sentiment snows down, embosoms all
The sharp and pointed shapes of venom, shawls
The hills and hides the shocking holes of this
Uneven world of want and wealth, cushions
With cosy wish like cotton-wool the cool
Arm's-length interstices of caste and class,
And into obese folds subtracts from sight
All truculent acts, bleeding the world white

Punctually that glib pair, Peace and Goodwill,
Emerges royally to take the air,
Collect the bows, assimilate the smiles,
Of waiting men It is a genial time,
Angels, like stalactites, descend from heaven,
Bishops distribute their own weight in words,
Congratulate the poor on Christlike lack,
And the member for the constituency
Feeds the five thousand, and has plenty back

Punctually, to-night, in old stone circles
Of set reunion, families stiffly sit
And listen this is the night and this the happy time
When the tinned milk of human kindness is
Upheld and holed by radio-appeal
Hushed are hurrying heels on hard roads,
And every parlour's a pink pond of light
To the cold and travelling man going by
In the dark, without a bark or a bite

But punctually to-morrow you will see
All this silent and dissembling world
Of stilted sentiment suddenly melt
Into mush and watery welter of words
Beneath the warm and moving traffic of
Feet and actual fact Over the stark plain
The silted mill-chimneys once again spread
Their sackcloth and ashes, a flowing mane
Of repentance for the false day that's fled

W R RODGERS

THIRTY BOB A WEEK

I COULDN'T touch a stop and turn a screw,
And set the blooming world a-work for me,
Like such as cut their teeth—I hope, like you—
On the handle of a skeleton gold key,
I cut mine on a leek, which I eat it every week
I'm a clerk at thirty bob, as you can see

But I don't allow it's luck and all a toss,
There's no such thing as being starred and crossed,
It's just the power of some to be a boss,
And the bally power of others to be bossed
I face the music, sir, you bet I ain't a cur,
Strike me lucky, if I don't believe I'm lost!

For like a mole I journey in the dark,
A-travelling along the underground
From my Pillar'd Halls and broad Suburban Park,
To come the daily, dull, official round,
And home again at night with my pipe all alight,
A-scheming how to count ten bob a pound

And it's often very cold and very wet,
And my missis stitches towels for a hunks,
And the Pillar'd Halls is half of it to let—
Three rooms about the size of travelling trunks
And we cough, my wife and I, to dislocate a sigh,
When the noisy little kids are in their bunks

But you never hear her do a growl or whine,
For she's made of flint and roses, very odd,
And I've got to cut my meaning rather fine,
Or I'd blubber, for I'm made of greens and sod
So p'r'aps we are in Hell for all that I can tell,
And lost and damn'd and served up hot to God

I ain't blaspheming, Mr Silver-tongue,
I'm saying things a bit beyond your art
Of all the rummy starts you ever sprung,
Thirty bob a week's the rummiest start!
With your science and your books and your the'ries
about spooks,
Did you ever think of looking in your heart?

I didn't mean your pocket, Mr , no
I mean that having children and a wife,
With thirty bob on which to come and go,
Isn't dancing to the tabor and the fife
When it doesn't make you drink, by Heaven! it makes
you think,
And notice curious items about life

I step into my heart and there I meet
A god-almighty devil singing small,
Who would like to shout and whistle in the street,
And squelch the passers flat against the wall,
If the whole world was a cake he had the power to take,
He would take it, ask for more, and eat it all

And I meet a sort of simpleton beside,
The kind that life is always giving beans,
With thirty bob a week to keep a bride
He fell in love and married in his teens
At thirty bob he stuck, but he knows it isn't luck,
He knows the seas are deeper than tureens

And the god-almighty devil and the fool
That meet me in the High Street on the strike,
When I walk about my heart a-gathering wool,
Are my good and evil angels if you like
And both of them together in every kind of weather
Ride me like a double-seated bike

That's rough a bit and needs its meaning curled
But I have a high old hot un in my mind—
A most engrugious notion of the world,
That leaves your lightning 'rithmetic behind
I give it at a glance when I say "There ain't no chance,
Nor nothing of the lucky-lottery kind "

And it's this way that I make it out to be
No fathers, mothers, countries, climates—none,
Not Adam was responsible for me,
Nor society, nor systems, nary one
A little sleeping seed, I woke—I did, indeed—
A million years before the blooming sun

I woke because I thought the time had come,
Beyond my will there was no other cause,
And everywhere I found myself at home,
Because I chose to be the thing I was,
And in whatever shape of mollusc or of ape
I always went according to the laws

I was the love that chose my mother out,
I joined two lives and from the union burst,
My weakness and my strength without a doubt
Are mine alone for ever from the first
It's just the very same with a difference in the name
As "Thy will be done " You say it if you durst!

They say it daily up and down the land
As easy as you take a drink, it's true,
But the difficultest go to understand,
And the difficultest job a man can do,
Is to come it brave and meek with thirty bob a week,
And feel that that's the proper thing for you

It's a naked child against a hungry wolf,
It's playing bowls upon a splitting wreck,
It's walking on a string across a gulf
With millstones fore-and-aft about your neck,
But the thing is daily done by many and many a one,
And we fall, face forward, fighting, on the deck

JOHN DAVIDSON

DESIRES OF MEN AND WOMEN

EXASPERATED, worn, you conjure a mansion,
The absolute butlers in the spacious hall,
Old silver, lace, and privacy, a house
Where nothing has for years been out of place,
Neither shoehorn nor affection been out of place,
Breakfast in summer on the eastern terrace,
All justice and all grace

At the reception
Most beautifully you conduct yourselves—
Expensive and accustomed, bow, speak French,
That Cinquecento miniature recall
The Duke presented to your great-grandmother—

And none of us, my dears, would dream of you
The half-lit and lascivious apartments
That are in fact your goal, for which you'd do
Murder if you had not your cowardice
To prop the law, or dream of you the rooms,
Glaring and inconceivably vulgar,
Where now you are, where now you wish for life,
Whence you project your naked fantasies

JOHN BERRYMAN

SHINE, PERISHING REPUBLIC

WHILE this America settles in the mold of its vulgarity,
heavily thickening to empire,
And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and
sighs out, and the mass hardens,

I sadly smiling remember that the flower fades to make
fruit, the fruit rots to make earth
Out of the mother, and through the spring exultances,
ripeness and decadence, and home to the mother

You make haste on decay not blameworthy, life is
good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly
A mortal splendor meteors are not needed less than
mountains shine, perishing republic

But for my children, I would have them keep their dis-
tance from the thickening center, corruption
Never has been compulsory, when the cities lie at the
monster's feet there are left the mountains

And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man,
a clever servant, insufferable master
There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught
—they say—God, when he walked on earth

ROBINSON JEFFERS

RIDES

So we ride, and ride through milked heaven

Above earth

No more for us the housed and fatted standing still

The train is carrier of us on the two-striped road-bed,

We sit in thunder over miles, calm as chairs,

At will?

Look again, we zoom in planes over the hill's head,

Motion, motion, our motion, up, down, and on,

World's girth

And laughing under the town-world's crust,

Thus riding

At the open and rushed dark subway doors,

Swung singing and talking with the unnoticed horses,

Or unfoamed by the spray, on liners,

Changing lores

Of bored speed, or rivalling winds in their (our?) courses

In the air we flight, to air-pressure-up

Confiding

Sometimes on the tumbled skin of laced seas,

Thus cresting

With staunch legs and opened hallooing, of surf

Making a race-shot thrill, on board with pair of reins,

Lengthened freedom of running covering the inland

Fraught turf

Ah, from riding, and the riding, who abstains?

In the cars, to the stars, waves, wars, riding

And questing

GENE DERWOOD

THE LEG IN THE SUBWAY

WHEN I saw the woman's leg on the floor of the subway
train,
Protrude beyond the panel (while her body overflowed
my mind's eye),
When I saw the pink stocking, black shoe, curve bulging
with warmth,
The delicate etching of the hair behind the flesh-colored
gauze,
When I saw the ankle of Mrs Nobody going nowhere
for a nickel,
When I saw this foot motionless on the moving motion-
less floor
My mind caught on a nail of a distant star, I was
wrenched out
Of the reality of the subway ride, I hung in a socket of
distance and this is what I saw

The long tongue of the earth's speed was licking the leg,
Upward and under and around went the long tongue of
speed
It was made of a flesh invisible, it dripped the saliva of
miles
It drank moment, lit shivers of insecurity in niches be-
tween bones
It was full of eyes, it stopped licking to look at the
passengers
It was as alive as a worm, and busier than anybody in
the train
It spoke saying 'To whom does this leg belong? Is it a
bonus leg
For the rush hour? Is it a forgotten leg? Among the
many
Myriads of legs did an extra leg fall in from the Out
There?

O Woman, sliced off bodily by the line of the panel, shall
I roll
Your leg into the abdominal nothing, among the diges-
tive teeth?
Or shall I fit it in with the pillars that hold up the head-
lines?
But nobody spoke, though all the faces were talking
silently,
As the train zoomed, a zipper closing up swiftly the
seam of time

Alas, said the long tongue of the speed of the earth quite
faintly,
What is one to do with an incorrigible leg that will not
melt—
But everybody stopped to listen to the train vomiting
cauldrons
Of silence, while somebody's jolted-out afterthought
trickled down
The blazing shirt-front solid with light bulbs, and just
then
The planetary approach of the next station exploded
atoms of light,
And when the train stopped, the leg had grown a sur-
prising mate,
And the long tongue had slipped hurriedly out through a
window

I perceived through the hole left by the nail of the star
in my mind
How civilization was as dark as a wood and dimensional
with things
And how birds dipped in chromium sang in the crevices
of our deeds

OSCAR WILLIAMS

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'TWOULD ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares

RALPH HODGSON

SHEEP

WHEN I was once in Baltimore,
A man came up to me and cried,
"Come, I have eighteen hundred sheep,
And we will sail on Tuesday's tide

"If you will sail with me, young man,
I'll pay you fifty shillings down,
These eighteen hundred sheep I take
From Baltimore to Glasgow town "

He paid me fifty shillings down,
I sailed with eighteen hundred sheep,
We soon had cleared the harbor's mouth,
We soon were in the salt sea deep

The first night we were out at sea
Those sheep were quiet in their mind,
The second night they cried with fear—
They smelt no pastures in the wind.

They sniffed, poor things, for their green fields,
They cried so loud I could not sleep,
For fifty thousand shillings down
I would not sail again with sheep

W H DAVIES

SHOPPING FOR MEAT IN WINTER

WHAT lewd, naked and revolting shape is this ?
A frozen oxtail in the butcher's shop
Long and lifeless upon the huge block of wood
On which the ogre's axe begins *chop chop*

The sun like incense fumes on the smoky glass,
The street frets with people, the winter wind
Throws knives, prices dangle from shoppers' mouths
While the grim vegetables, on parade, bring to mind

The great countryside bathed in golden sleep,
The trees, the bees, the soft peace everywhere—
I think of the cow's tail, how all summer long
It beat the shapes of harps into the air

OSCAR WILLIAMS

THE ZEBRAS

FROM the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers,
Harnessed with level rays in golden reins,
The zebras draw the dawn across the plains
Wading knee-deep among the scarlet flowers
The sunlight, zithering their flanks with fire,
Flashes between the shadows as they pass
Barred with electric tremors through the grass
Like wind along the gold strings of a lyre

Into the flushed air snorting rosy plumes
That smoulder round their feet in drifting fumes,
With dove-like voices call the distant fillies,
While round the herds the stallion wheels his flight,
Engine of beauty volted with delight,
To roll his mare among the trampled lilies

ROY CAMPBELL

OUT IN THE DARK

OUT in the dark over the snow
The fallow fawns invisible go
With the fallow doe,
And the winds blow
Fast as the stars are slow

Stealthily the dark haunts round
And, when the lamp goes, without sound
At a swifter bound
Than the swiftest hound,
Arrives, and all else is drowned,

And I and star and wind and deer,
Are in the dark together,—near,
Yet far,—and fear
Drums on my ear
In that sage company drear

How weak and little is the light,
All the universe of sight,
Love and delight,
Before the might,
If you love it not, of might

EDWARD THOMAS

THE FLY

O HIDEOUS little bat, the size of snot,
With polyhedral eye and shabby clothes,
To populate the stinking cat you walk
The promontory of the dead man's nose,
Climb with the fine leg of a Duncan Phyfe
 The smoking mountains of my food
 And in a comic mood
In mid-air take to bed a wife

Riding and riding with your filth of hair
On gluey foot or wing, forever coy,
Hot from the compost and green sweet decay
Sounding your buzzer like an urchin toy,
You dot all whiteness with diminutive stool,
 In the tight belly of the dead
 Burrow with hungry head
And inlay maggots like a jewel

THE TROPHY

THE wise king crowned with blessings on his throne,
The rebel raising his flag in the market-place,
Haunt me like figures on an ancient stone
The ponderous light of history beats upon,
Or the enigma of a single face
Handed unguessed, unread from father to son,
As if it dreamt within itself alone

Regent and rebel clash in horror and blood
Here on the blindfold battlefield But there,
Motionless in the grove of evil and good
They grow together and their roots are twined
In deep confederacy far from the air,
Sharing the secret trophy each with other,
And king and rebel are like brother and brother,
Or father and son, co-princes of one mind,
Irreconcilables, their treaty signed

EDWIN MUIR

THE GIFT OUTRIGHT

THE land was ours before we were the land's
She was our land more than a hundred years
Before we were her people She was ours
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,
But we were England's, still colonials,
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,
Possessed by what we now no more possessed

Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found out that it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become

ROBERT FROST

THE MEDITERRANEAN

Quem das finem, rex magne, dolorum?

WHERE we went in the boat was a long bay
A slingshot wide, walled in by towering stone—
Peaked margin of antiquity's delay,
And we went there out of time's monotone

Where we went in the black hull no light moved
But a gull white-winged along the feckless wave,
The breeze, unseen but fierce as a body loved,
That boat drove onward like a willing slave

Where we went in the small ship the seaweed
Parted and gave to us the murmuring shore
And we made feast and in our secret need
Devoured the very plates Aeneas bore

Where derelict you see through the low twilight
The green coast that you, thunder-tossed, would win,
Drop sail, and hastening to drink all night
Eat dish and bowl—to take that sweet land in!

Where we feasted and caroused on the sandless
Pebbles, affecting our day of piracy,
What prophecy of eaten plates could landless
Wanderers fulfil by the ancient sea?

We for that time might taste the famous age
Eternal here yet hidden from our eyes
When lust of power undid its stuffless rage,
They, in a wineskin, bore earth's paradise

Let us lie down once more by the breathing side
Of Ocean, where our live forefathers sleep
As if the Known Sea still were a month wide—
Atlantis howls but is no longer steep!

What country shall we conquer, what fair land
Unman our conquest and locate our blood?
We've cracked the hemispheres with careless hand!
Now, from the Gates of Hercules we flood

Westward, westward till the barbarous brine
Whelms us to the tired world where tasseling corn,
Fat beans, grapes sweeter than muscadine
Rot on the vine in that land were we born

ALLEN TATE

THE SECOND COMING

TURNING and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer,
Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned,
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity

Surely some revelation is at hand,
Surely the Second Coming is at hand
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds
The darkness drops again, but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

W B YEATS

RECESSIONAL

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away,
On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard,

For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

RUDYARD KIPLING

NO 6 OF CHORUSES FROM
"THE ROCK"

It is hard for those who have never known persecution,
And who have never known a Christian,
To believe these tales of Christian persecution
It is hard for those who live near a Bank
To doubt the security of their money
It is hard for those who live near a Police Station
To believe in the triumph of violence
Do you think that the Faith has conquered the World
And that lions no longer need keepers?
Do you need to be told that whatever has been, can still
be?
Do you need to be told that even such modest attain-
ments
As you can boast in the way of polite society
Will hardly survive the Faith to which they owe their
significance?
Men! polish your teeth on rising and retiring,
Women! polish your fingernails
You polish the tooth of the dog and the talon of the cat
Why should men love the Church? Why should they
love her laws?
She tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they
would forget
She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where
they like to be soft

She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant
facts

They constantly try to escape
From the darkness outside and within
By dreaming of systems so perfect that no-one will need
to be good

But the man that is will shadow
The man that pretends to be
And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all,
The blood of the Martyrs not shed once for all,
The lives of the Saints not given once for all
But the Son of Man is crucified always
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints
And if blood of Martyrs is to flow on the steps
We must first build the steps,
And if the Temple is to be cast down
We must first build the Temple

T S ELIOT

TELL ALL THE TRUTH

TELL all the truth but tell it slant,
Success in circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm delight
The truth's superb surprise,

As lightning to the children eased
With explanation kind,
The truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind

EMILY DICKINSON

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION

AND death shall have no dominion
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon,
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones
gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot,
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again,
Though lovers be lost love shall not,
And death shall have no dominion

And death shall have no dominion
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily,
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break,
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through,
Split all ends up they shan't crack,
And death shall have no dominion

And death shall have no dominion
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores,
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain,
Though they be mad and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies,
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion

DYLAN THOMAS

ORIGINAL SIN A SHORT STORY

NODDING, its great head rattling like a gourd,
And locks like seaweed strung on the stinking stone,
The nightmare stumbles past, and you have heard
It fumble your door before it whimpers and is gone
It acts like the old hound that used to snuffle your door
and moan

You thought you had lost it when you left Omaha,
For it seemed connected then with your grandpa, who
Had a wen on his forehead and sat on the veranda
To finger the precious protuberance, as was his habit to
do,
Which glinted in sun like rough garnet or the rich old
brain bulging through

But you met it in Harvard Yard as the historic steeple
Was confirming the midnight with its hideous racket,
And you wondered how it had come, for it stood so
imbecile,
With empty hands, humble, and surely nothing in
pocket
Riding the rods, perhaps—or grandpa's will paid the
ticket

You were almost kindly then, in your first homesickness,
As it tortured its stiff face to speak, but scarcely mewed,
Since then you have outlived all your homesickness,
But have met it in many another distempered latitude
Oh, nothing is lost, ever lost! at last you understood

But it never came in the quantum glare of sun
To shame you before your friends, and had nothing to do
With your public experience or private reformation

But it thought no bed too narrow—it stood with lips
askew
And shook its great head sadly like the abstract Jew
Never met you in the lyric arsenical meadow
When children call and your heart goes stone in the
bosom,
At the orchard anguish never, nor ovoid horror,
Which is furred like a peach or avid like the delicious
plum
It takes no part in your classic prudence or fondled
axiom

Not there when you exclaimed “Hope is betrayed by
Disastrous glory of sea-capes, sun-torment of whitecaps
—There must be a new innocence for us to be stayed
by”

But there it stood, after all the timetables, all the maps,
In the crepuscular clutter of *always, always, or perhaps*

You have moved often and rarely left an address,
And hear of the deaths of friends with a sly pleasure,
A sense of cleansing and hope, which blooms from
distress,
But it has not died, it comes, its hand childish, unsure,
Clutching the bribe of chocolate or a toy you used to
treasure

It tries the lock, you hear, but simply drowse
There is nothing remarkable in that sound at the door
Later you hear it wander the dark house
Like a mother who rises at night to seek a childhood
picture,
Or it goes to the backyard and stands like an old horse
cold in the pasture

ROBERT PENN WARREN

EVE

EVE, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees,
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and—
Now was the moment or
Never at all

'Eva!' Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
'Eva!' he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silverly
'Eva!' he said

Picture that orchard sprite,
Eve, with her body white,
Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips,
Wondering, listening,

Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips

Oh, had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him!
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying,
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,

Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain
Picture that lewd delight
Under the hill to-night—
'Eva!' the toast goes round,
'Eva!' again

RALPH HODGSON

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

BOOTH led boldly with his big bass drum
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said 'He's come'
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers following, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over (Booth had groaned for more)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang
'Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?'
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare

On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land

Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house square
Then, in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!
The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Oh, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air

Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down
He saw King Jesus They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

VACHEL LINDSAY

THE CHARIOT

BECAUSE I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me,
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too,
For his civility

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done,
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling on the ground,
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound

Since then 'tis centuries, but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity

EMILY DICKINSON

MOONRISE

AND who has seen the moon, who has not seen
Her rise from out the chamber of the deep,
Flushed and grand and naked, as from the chamber,
Of finished bridegroom, seen her rise and throw
Confession of delight upon the wave,
Littering the waves with her own superscription
Of bliss, till all her lambent beauty shakes toward us
Spread out and known at last, and we are sure
That beauty is a thing beyond the grave,
That perfect, bright experience never falls
To nothingness, and time will dim the moon
Sooner than our full consummation here
In this odd life will tarnish or pass away

D H LAWRENCE

HOLY LIGHT

LIFE, where your lone candle burns
In the darkness of the night,
Mothlike my lost spirit turns
Toward you, in its circling flight

Steadily your beauty draws
Onward, with each hurrying breath—
Till I flutter, till I pause
In the radiance of death

I am naming, I am need—

All around you reigns the night,
But my agony has fed
You, a moment, holy light

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

PUTTING TO SEA

WHO, in the dark, has cast the harbor-chain?
This is no journey to a land we know
The autumn night receives us, hoarse with rain,
Storm flakes with roaring foam the way we go

Sodden with summer, stupid with its loves,
The country which we leave, and now this bare
Circle of ocean which the heaven proves
Deep as its height, and barren with despair

Now this whole silence, through which nothing breaks,
Now this whole sea, which we possess alone,
Flung out from shore with speed a missile takes
When some hard hand, in hatred, flings a stone

The Way should mark our course within the night,
The streaming System, turned without a sound
What choice is this—profundity and flight—
Great sea? Our lives through we have trod the ground

Motion beneath us, fixity above
"O, but you should rejoice! The course we steer

Points to a beach bright to the rocks with love,
Where, in hot calms, blades clatter on the ear,

And spiny fruits up through the earth are fed
With fire, the palm trees clatter, the wave leaps
Fleeing a shore where heart-loathed love lies dead
We point lands where love fountains from its deeps

Through every season the coarse fruits are set
In earth not fed by streams " Soft into time
Once broke the flower pear and violet,
The cinquefoil The tall elm tree and the lime

Once held out fruitless boughs, and fluid green
Once rained about us, pulse of earth indeed
There, out of metal, and to light obscene,
The flamy blooms burn backward to their seed

With so much hated still so close behind
The sterile shores before us must be faced,
Again, against the body and the mind,
The hate that bruises, though the heart is braced

Bend to the chart, in the extinguished night,
Mariners! Make way slowly, stay from sleep,
That we may have short respite from such light

And learn, with joy, the gulf, the vast, the deep

LOUISE BOGAN

PRELUDE I

WINTER for a moment takes the mind, the snow
Falls past the arclight, icicles guard a wall,
The wind moans through a crack in the window,
A keen sparkle of frost is on the sill
Only for a moment, as spring too might engage it,
With a single crocus in the loam, or a pair of birds,
Or summer with hot grass, or autumn with a yellow leaf
Winter is there, outside, is here in me
Drapes the planets with snow, deepens the ice on the
moon,
Darkens the darkness that was already darkness
The mind too has its snows, its slippery paths,
Walls bayonnetted with ice, leaves ice-encased
Here is the in-drawn room, to which you return
When the wind blows from Arcturus here is the fire
At which you warm your hands and glaze your eyes,
The piano, on which you touch the cold treble,
Five notes like breaking icicles, and then silence

The alarm-clock ticks, the pulse keeps time with it,
Night and the mind are full of sounds I walk
From the fire-place, with its imaginary fire,
To the window, with its imaginary view
Darkness, and snow ticking the window silence,
And the knocking of chains on a motor-car, the tolling
Of a bronze bell, dedicated to Christ
And then the uprush of angelic wings, the beating
Of wings demonic, from the abyss of the mind
The darkness filled with a feathery whistling, wings
Numberless as the flakes of angelic snow,
The deep void swarming with wings and sound of wings,

The winnowing of chaos, the aliveness
Of depth and depth and depth dedicated to death

Here are the bickerings of the inconsequential,
The chatterings of the ridiculous, the iterations
Of the meaningless Memory, like a juggler,
Tosses its colored balls into the light, and again
Receives them into darkness Here is the absurd,
Grinning like an idiot, and the omnivorous quotidian,
Which will have its day A handful of coins,
Tickets, items from the news, a soiled handkerchief,
A letter to be answered, notice of a telephone call,
The petal of a flower in a volume of Shakspeare,
The program of a concert The photograph, too,
Propped on the mantel, and beneath it a dry rosebud,
The laundry bill, matches, an ash-tray, Utamaro's
Pearl-fishers And the rug, on which are still the crumbs
Of yesterday's feast These are the void, the night,
And the angelic wings that make it sound

What is the flower? It is not a sigh of color,
Suspuration of purple, sibilation of saffron,
Nor aureate exhalation from the tomb
Yet it is these because you think of these,
An emanation of emanations, fragile
As light, or glisten, or gleam, or coruscation,
Creature of brightness, and as brightness brief
What is the frost? It is not the sparkle of death,
The flash of time's wing, seeds of eternity,
Yet it is these because you think of these
And you, because you think of these, are both
Frost and flower, the bright ambiguous syllable
Of which the meaning is both no and yes

Here is the tragic, the distorting mirror
In which your gesture becomes grandiose,
Tears form and fall from your magnificent eyes,
The brow is noble, and the mouth is God's
Here is the God who seeks his mother, Chaos,—
Confusion seeking solution, and life seeking death
Here is the rose that woos the icicle, the icicle
That woos the rose Here is the silence of silences
Which dreams of becoming a sound, and the sound
Which will perfect itself in silence And all
These things are only the uprush from the void,
The wings angelic and demonic, the sound of the abyss
Dedicated to death And this is you

CONRAD AIKEN

PRELUDE LII

STOOD, at the closed door, and remembered—
Hand on the doorpost faltered, and remembered—
The long ago, the far away, the near
With its absurdities—the calendar,
The one-eyed calendar upon the wall,
And time dispersed, and in a thousand ways,
Calendars torn, appointments made and kept,
Or made and broken, and the shoes worn out
Going and coming, street and stair and street,
Lamplight and starlight, fog and north-east wind,
St Mary's ringing the angelus at six—

And it was there, at eight o'clock I saw
Vivien and the infinite, together,
And it was here I signed my name in pencil
Against the doorpost, and later saw the snow

Left by the messenger, and here were voices—
Come back later, do come back later, if you can,
And tell us what it was, tell us what you saw,
Put your heart on the table with your hand
And tell us all those secrets that are known
In the profound interstices of time—
The glee, the wickedness, the smirk, the sudden
Divine delight—do come back and tell us,
The clock has stopped, sunset is on the snow,
Midnight is far away, and morning farther—

And then the trains that cried at night, the ships
That mourned in fog, the days whose gift was rain,
June's daisy, and she loved me not, the skull
Brought from the tomb—and I was there, and saw
The bright spade break the bone, the trumpet-vine
Bugled with bees, and on my knees I picked
One small white clover in the cactus shade,
Put it in water and took it to that room
Where blinds were drawn and all was still—

Neighbours, I have come
From a vast everything whose sum is nothing,
From a complexity whose speech is simple,
Here are my hands and heart, and I have brought
Nothing you do not know, and do not fear
Here is the evening paper at your door—
Here are your letters, I have brought the tickets,
The hour is early, and the speech is late
Come, we are gods,—let us discourse as gods,
And weigh the grain of sand with Socrates,
Before we fall to kissing, and to bed

CONRAD AIKEN

SONNETS

I

ALTARWISE by owl-light in the halfway-house
The gentleman lay graveward with his furies,
Abaddon in the hang-nail cracked from Adam,
And, from his fork, a dog among the fairies,
The atlas-eater with a jaw for news,
Bit out the mandrake with to-morrow's scream
Then, penny-eyed, that gentleman of wounds,
Old cock from nowheres and the heaven's egg,
With bones unbuttoned to the halfway winds,
Hatched from the windy salvage on one leg,
Scraped at my cradle in a walking word
That night of time under the Christward shelter,
I am the long world's gentleman, he said,
And share my bed with Capricorn and Cancer

II

Death is all metaphors, shape in one history,
The child that sucketh long is shooting up,
The planet-ducted pelican of circles
Weans on an artery the gender's strip,
Child of the short spark in a shapeless country
Soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle,
The horizontal cross-bones of Abaddon,
You by the cavern over the black stairs,
Rung bone and blade, the verticals of Adam,
And, manned by midnight, Jacob to the stars,
Hairs of your head, then said the hollow agent,
Are but the roots of nettles and of feathers
Over these groundworks thrusting through a pavement
And hemlock-headed in the wood of weathers

III

First there was the lamb on knocking knees
 And three dead seasons on a climbing grave
 That Adam's wether in the flock of horns,
 Butt of the tree-tailed worm that mounted Eve,
 Horned down with skullfoot and the skull of toes
 On thunderous pavements in the garden time,
 Rip of the vaults, I took my marrow-ladle
 Out of the wrinkled undertaker's van,
 And, Rip Van Winkle from a timeless cradle,
 Dipped me breast-deep in the descended bone,
 The black ram, shuffling of the year, old winter,
 Alone alive among his mutton fold,
 We rung our weathering changes on the ladder,
 Said the antipodes, and twice spring chimed

IV

What is the metre of the dictionary?
 The size of genesis? The short spark's gender?
 Shade without shape? The shape of Pharaoh's echo?
 (My shape of age nagging the wounded whisper)
 Which sixth of wind blew out the burning gentry?
 (Questions are hunchbacks to the poker marrow)
 What of a bamboo man among your acres?
 Corset the boneyards for a crooked lad?
 Button your bodice on a hump of splinters,
 My camel's eyes will needle through the shroud
 Love's reflection of the mushroom features,
 Stills snapped by night in the bread-sided field,
 Once close-up smiling in the wall of pictures,
 Arc-lamped thrown back upon the cutting flood

And from the windy West came two-gunned Gabriel,
 From Jesu's sleeve trumped up the king of spots,
 The sheath-decked jacks, queen with a shuffled heart,
 Said the fake gentleman in suit of spades,
 Black-tongued and tipsy from salvation's bottle,
 Rose my Byzantine Adam in the night,
 For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's plain,
 Under the milky mushrooms slew my hunger,
 A climbing sea from Asia had me down
 And Jonah's Moby snatched me by the hair,
 Cross-stroked salt Adam to the frozen angel
 Pin-legged on pole-hills with a black medusa
 By waste seas where the white bear quoted Virgil
 And sirens singing from our lady's sea-straw

VI

Cartoons of slashes on the tide-traced crater,
 He in a book of water tallow-eyed
 By lava's light split through the oyster vowels
 And burned sea silence on a wick of words
 Pluck cock, my sea eye, said medusa's scripture,
 Lop, love, my fork tongue, said the pin-hilled nettle,
 And love plucked out the stinging siren's eye,
 Old cock from nowheres lopped the minstrel tongue
 Till tallow I blew from the wax's tower
 The fats of midnight when the salt was singing,
 Adam, time's joker, on a witch of cardboard
 Spelt out the seven seas, an evil index,
 The bagpipe-breasted ladies in the deadweed
 Blew out the blood gauze through the wound of man-
 wax

Now stamp the Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice,
 A Bible-leaved of all the written woods
 Strip to this tree a rocking alphabet,
 Genesis in the root, the scarecrow word,
 And one light's language in the book of trees,
 Doom on deniers at the wind-turned statement
 Time's tune my ladies with the teats of music,
 The scaled sea-sawers, fix in a naked sponge
 Who sucks the bell-voiced Adam out of magic,
 Time, milk, and magic, from the world beginning
 Time is the tune my ladies lend their heartbreak,
 From bald pavilions and the house of bread
 Time tracks the sound of shape on man and cloud,
 On rose and icicle the ringing handprint

VIII

This was the crucifixion on the mountain,
 Time's nerve in vinegar, the gallow grave
 As tarred with blood as the bright thorns I wept,
 The world's my wound, God's Mary in her grief,
 Bent like three trees and bird-papped through her shift,
 With pins for teardrops is the long wound's woman
 This was the sky, Jack Christ, each minstrel angle
 Drove in the heaven-driven of the nails
 Till the three-coloured rainbow from my nipples
 From pole to pole leapt round the snail-waked world
 I by the tree of thieves, all glory's sawbones
 Unsex the skeleton this mountain minute,
 And by this blowcock witness of the sun
 Suffer the heaven's children through my heartbeat

From the oracular archives and the parchment,
 Prophets and fibre kings in oil and letter,
 The lamped calligrapher, the queen in splints,
 Buckle to lint and cloth their natron footsteps,
 Draw on the glove of prints, dead Cairo's henna
 Pour like a halo on the caps and serpents
 This was the resurrection in the desert,
 Death from a bandage, rants the mask of scholars
 Gold on such features, and the linen spirit
 Weds my long gentlemen to dusts and furies,*
 With priest and pharaoh bed my gentle wound,
 World in the sand, on the triangle landscape,
 With stones of odyssey for ash and garland
 And rivers of the dead around my neck

X

Let the tale's sailor from a Christian voyage
 Atlaswise hold halfway off the dummy bay
 Time's ship-racked gospel on the globe I balance
 So shall winged harbours through the rockbirds' eyes
 Spot the blown word, and on the seas I image
 December's thorn screwed in a brow of holly
 Let the first Peter from a rainbow's quayrail
 Ask the tall fish swept from the bible east,
 What rhubarb man peeled in her foam-blue channel
 Has sown a flying garden round that sea-ghost?
 Green as beginning, let the garden diving
 Soar, with its two bark towers, to that Day
 When the worm builds with the gold straws of venom
 My nest of mercies in the rude, red tree

DYLAN THOMAS

THE SPINNING HEART

THE fireflies and the stars our only light,
We rock, watching between the roses night
If we could see the roses We cannot

Where do the fireflies go by day, what eat?
What categories shall we use to-night?
The day was an exasperating day,
The day in history must hang its head
For the foul letters many women got,
Appointments missed, men dishevelled and sad
Before their mirrors trying to be proud
But now, we say, the sweetness of the night
Will hide our imperfections from our sight,
For nothing can be angry or astray,
No man unpopular, lonely or beset,
Where half a yellow moon hangs from a cloud

Spinning however and balled up in space
All hearts, desires, pewter and honeysuckle,
What can be known of the individual face?
To the continual drumbeat of the blood
Mesh sea and mountain recollection, flame,
Motives in the corridor, touch by night,
Violent touch and violence in rooms—
How shall we reconcile in any light
The blow and the relations that it wrecked?
The nineteen pressures on the single act
Freeze it at last into its season, place,
Until the flood and disorder of Spring
To Easterfield, that famous bore, defining
Space tied into a sailor's reef, our praise
He too is useful, he is a part of this,

Inimitable, tangible and human,
And Theo's disappointment has a place,
An item in that metamorphosis
The horrible coquetry of aging women
Our superstitions barnacle our eyes
To the tide, the coming good, or has it come?—
Insufficient upon the beaches of the world
To drown that complex and that bestial drum

Triumphant animal, upon the rest
Bearing down hard, brooding, come to announce
The causes and directions of all this
Biting and breeding how will all your sons
Discover what you, assisted or alone,
Staring and sweating for seventy years,
Could never discover, the thing itself?

Your fears,

Fidelity, and dandelions grown
As big as elephants, your morning lust
Can neither name nor control No time for shame,
Whippoorwill calling, excrement falling, time
Rushes like a madman forward Nothing can be known

JOHN BERRYMAN

SEA HOLLY

BEGOTTEN by the meeting of rock with rock,
The mating of rock and rock, rocks gnashing together,
Created so, and yet forgetful, walks
The seaward path, puts up her left hand, shades
Blue eyes, the eyes of rock, to see better
In slanting light the ancient sheep (which kneels

Biting the grass) the while her other hand,
Hooking the wicker handle, turns the basket
Of eggs The sea is high to-day The eggs
Are cheaper The sea is blown from the southwest,
Confused, taking up sand and mud in waves,
The waves break, sluggish, in brown foam, the wind
Disperses (on the sheep and hawthorn) spray,—
And on her cheeks, the cheeks engendered of rock,
And eyes, the colour of rock The left hand
Falls from the eyes, and undecided slides
Over the left breast on which muslin lightly
Rests, touching the nipple, and then down
The hollow side, virgin as rock, and bitterly
Caresses the blue hip

It was for this,
This obtuse taking of the seaward path,
This stupid hearing of larks, this hooking
Of wicker, this absent observation of sheep
Kneeling in harsh sea-grass, the cool hand shading
The spray-stung eyes—it was for this the rock
Smote itself The sea is higher to-day,
And eggs are cheaper The eyes of rock take in
The seaward path that winds toward the sea,
The thistle-prodder, old woman under a bonnet,
Forking the thistles, her back against the sea,
Pausing, with hard hands on the handle, peering
With rock eyes from her bonnet

It was for this,
This rock-lipped facing of brown waves, half sand
And half water, this tentative hand that slides
Over the breast of rock, and into the hollow
Soft side of muslin rock, and then fiercely
Almost as rock against the hip of rock—

It was for this in midnight the rocks met,
And dithered together, cracking and smoking

It was for this
Barren beauty, barrenness of rock that aches
On the seaward path, seeing the fruitful sea,
Hearing the lark of rock that sings, smelling
The rock-flower of hawthorn, sweetness of rock—
It was for this, stone pain in the stony heart,
The rock loved and laboured, and all is lost

CONRAD AIKEN

THE BLACK PANTHER

THERE is a panther caged within my breast,
But what his name, there is no breast shall know
Save mine, nor what it is that drives him so,
Backward and forward, in relentless quest—
That silent rage, baffled but unsuppressed,
The soft pad of those stealthy feet that go
Over my body's prison to and fro,
Trying the walls forever, without rest

All day I feed him with my living heart,
But when the night puts forth her dreams and stars,
The inexorable frenzy re-awakes
His wrath is hurled upon the trembling bars,
The eternal passion stretches me apart,
And I lie silent—but my body shakes

JOHN HALL WHELOCK

THE OATH

It was near evening, the room was cold,
Half dark, Uncle Ben's brass bullet-mould
And powder-horn and Major Bogan's face
Above the fire in the half-light plainly said
There's naught to kill but the animated dead
Horn nor mould nor major follows the chase
Being cold I urged Lytle to the fire
In the blank twilight with not much left untold
By two old friends when neither's a great liar
We sat down evenly in the smoky chill
There's precious little to say betwixt day and dark,
Perhaps a few words on the implacable will
Of time sailing like a magic barque
Or something as fine for the amenities,
Till the dusk seals the window, the fire grows bright,
And the wind saws the hill with a swarm of bees
Now meditating a little on the firelight
We heard the darkness grapple with the night
And give an old man's valedictory wheeze
From his westward breast between his polar jaws,
Then Lytle asked Who are the dead?
Who are the living and the dead?
And nothing more was said
So I leaving Lytle to that dream
Decided what it is in time that gnaws
The aging fury of a mountain stream
When suddenly, as an ignorant mind will do,
I thought I heard the dark pounding its head
On a rock, crying *Who are the dead?*
Then Lytle turned with an oath—By God it's true!

ALLEN TATE

COME IN

As I came to the edge of the woods,
Thrush music—hark!
Now if it was dusk outside,
Inside it was dark

Too dark in the woods for a bird
By sleight of wing
To better its perch for the night,
Though it still could sing

The last of the light of the sun
That had died in the west
Still lived for one song more
In a thrush's breast

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went—
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament

But no, I was out for stars
I would not come in
I meant not even if asked,
And I hadn't been

ROBERT FROST

THE WOLVES

THERE are wolves in the next room waiting
With heads bent low, thrust out, breathing
At nothing in the dark between them and me
A white door patched with light from the hall
Where it seems never (so still is the house)
A man has walked from the front door to the stair
It has all been forever A beast claws the floor
I have brooded on angels and archfiends
But no man has ever sat where the next room's
Crowded with wolves, and for the honor of man
I affirm that never have I before Now while
I have looked for the evening star at a cold window
And whistled when Arcturus spilt his light,
I've heard the wolves scuffle, and said So this
Is man, so—what better conclusion is there—
The day will not follow night, and the heart
Of man has a little dignity, but less patience
Than a wolf's, and a duller sense that cannot
Smell its own mortality (This and other
Meditations will be suited to other times
After dog silence howls my epitaph)
Now remember courage, go to the door,
Open it and see whether coiled on the bed
Or cringing by the wall a savage beast
Maybe with golden hair, with deep eyes
Like a bearded spider on a sunlit floor,
Will snarl—and man can never be alone

ALLEN TATE

THE SLEEPING FURY

You are here now,
Who were so loud and feared, in a symbol before me,
Alone and asleep, and I at last look long upon you

Your hair fallen on your cheek, no longer in the semblance of serpents,
Lifted in the gale, your mouth, that shrieked so, silent
You, my scourge, my sister, lie asleep, like a child,
Who, after rage, for an hour quiet, sleeps out its tears

The days close to winter
Rough with strong sound We hear the sea and the forest,
And the flames of your torches fly, lit by others,
Ripped by the wind, in the night The black sheep for sacrifice
Huddle together The milk is cold in the jars

All to no purpose, as before, the knife whetted and plunged,
The shout raised, to match the clamor you have given them
You alone turn away, not appeased, unaltered, avenger

Hands full of scourges, wreathed with your flames and adders,
You alone turned away, but did not move from my side,
Under the broken light, when the soft nights took the torches

At thin morning you showed, thick and wrong in that calm,
The ignoble dream and the mask, sly, with slits at the eyes,

Pretence and half-sorrow, beneath which a coward's hope
trembled

You uncovered at night, in the locked stillness of houses,
False love due the child's heart, the kissed-out lie, the
embraces

Made by the two who for peace tenderly turned to each
other

You who know what we love, but drive us to know it,
You with your whips and shrieks, bearer of truth and of
solitude,
You who give, unlike men, to expiation your mercy

Dropping the scourge when at last the scourged advances
to meet it,
You, when the hunted turns, no longer remain the hunter
But stand silent and wait, at last returning his gaze

Beautiful now as a child whose hair, wet with rage and
tears,
Clings to its face And now I may look upon you,
Having once met your eyes You lie in sleep and forget
me
Alone and strong in my peace, I look upon you in yours

LOUISE BOGAN

THE DOLLS

I FOUND them lying on the shore,
Sweet shapes, pearl-lipped and crescent-eyed
Night after night their hands implore
Pathetic mercies at my side

They reach into my secret night
While pale and terrifying arms
And offer in a dark delight
Their subtle suicidal charms,

Gently they sigh into my mind
Wild words half uttered, half unsaid,
And when I dream of death I find
Small tears of glass upon my bed

They are the children of desire,
They live on fear, they are my deep
And buried thoughts with eyes of fire,
They are the furies of my sleep

FREDERIC PROKOSCH

SONNET

FLESH, I have knocked at many a dusty door,
Gone down full many a windy midnight lane,
Probed in old walls and felt along the floor,
Pressed in blind hope the lighted window-pane
But useless all, though sometimes, when the moon
Was full in heaven and the sea was full,
Along my body's alleys came a tune
Played in the tavern by the Beautiful

Then for an instant I have felt at point
To find and seize her, whosoe'er she be,
Whether some saint whose glory doth anoint

Those whom she loves, or but a part of me,
Or something that the things not understood
Make for their uses out of flesh and blood

JOHN MASEFIELD

THE DREAM

O God, in the dream the terrible horse began
To paw at the air, and make for me with his blows
Fear kept for thirty-five years poured through his mane,
And retribution equally old, or nearly, breathed through
his nose

Coward complete, I lay and wept on the ground
When some strong creature appeared, and leapt for the
rein

Another woman, as I lay half in a swoond
Leapt in the air, and clutched at the leather and chain

Give him, she said, something of yours as a charm
Throw him, she said, some poor thing you alone claim
No, no, I cried, he hates me, he's out for harm,
And whether I yield or not, it is all the same

But, like a lion in a legend, when I flung the glove
Pulled from my sweating, my cold right hand,
The terrible beast, that no one may understand,
Came to my side, and put down his head in love

LOUISE BOGAN

WHAT IF A MUCH OF A WHICH OF A WIND

what if a much of a which of a wind
gives the truth to summer's lie,
bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun
and yanks immortal stars awry?
Blow king to beggar and queen to seem
(blow friend to fiend blow space to time)
—when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,
the single secret will still be man

what if a keen of a lean wind flays
screaming hills with sleet and snow
strangles valleys by ropes of thing
and stifles forests in white ago?
Blow hope to terror, blow seeing to blind
(blow pity to envy and soul to mind)
—whose hearts are mountains, roots are trees,
it's they shall cry hello to the spring

what if a dawn of a doom of a dream
bites this universe in two,
peels forever out of his grave
and sprinkles nowhere with me and you?
Blow soon to never and never to twice
(blow life to isn't blow death to was)
—all nothing's only our hugest home,
the most who die, the more we live

E E CUMMINGS

AS FREEDOM IS A BREAKFASTFOOD

as freedom is a breakfastfood
or truth can live with right and wrong
or molehills are from mountains made
—long enough and just so long
will being pay the rent of seem
and genius please the talentgang
and water most encourage flame

as hatracks into peachtrees grow
or hopes dance best on bald men's hair
and every finger is a toe
and any courage is a fear
—long enough and just so long
will the impure think all things pure
and hornets wail by children stung

or as the seeing are the blind
and robins never welcome spring
nor flatfolk prove their world is round
nor dingsters die at break of dong
and common's rare and millstones float
—long enough and just so long
tomorrow will not be too late

worms are the words but joy's the voice
down shall go which and up come who
breasts will be breasts thighs will be thighs
deeds cannot dream what dreams can do
—time is a tree (this life one leaf)
but love is the sky and i am for you
just so long and long enough

E E CUMMINGS

ANYONE LIVED IN A PRETTY HOW TOWN

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did

Women and men (both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed (but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then) they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
(and only the snow can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes

Women and men (both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

E E CUMMINGS

CAPTAIN CARPENTER

CAPTAIN CARPENTER rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got well nigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose for evermore

Captain Carpenter mounted up one day
And rode straight way into a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as it may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue

But drew upon him out of his great heart
The other swung against him with a club
And cracked his two legs at the shinny part
And let him roll and stick like any tub

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
From male and female took he sundry harms
He met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more arms "

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
I wish he had delivered half his blows
But where she should have made off like a hind
The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows

And Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
To a black devil that used him in this wise
O Jesus ere his threescore and ten years
Another had plucked out his sweet blue eyes

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
And sallied from the gate in hell's despite
I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
Such are the perils he is cast among

"But if he can he has a pretty choice
From an anatomy with little to lose
Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
Or whether it be my round red heart he choose "

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower
Who at this word put in his merry mien
And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the old heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack

The rogue in scarlet and gray soon knew his mind
He wished to get his trophy and depart,
With gentle apology and touch refined
He pierced him and produced the Captain's heart

God's mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
I thought him Sirs an honest gentleman
Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
Let jangling kites eat of him if they can

But God's deep curses follow after those
That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
And eyes that had not watered seventy years

The curses of hell upon the sleek upstart
Who got the Captain finally on his back
And took the red red vitals of his heart
And made the kites to whet their beaks clack clack

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

LEGAL FICTION

LAW makes long spokes of the short stakes of men
Your well fenced out real estate of mind
No high flat of the nomad citizen
Looks over, or train leaves behind

Your rights extend under and above your claim
Without bound, you own land in Heaven and Hell,
Your part of earth's surface and mass the same,
Of all cosmos' volume, and all stars as well

Your rights reach down where all owners meet, in Hell's
Pointed exclusive conclave, at earth's centre
(Your spun farm's root still on that axis dwells),
And up, through galaxies, a growing sector

You are nomad yet, the lighthouse beam you own
Flashes, like Lucifer, through the firmament
Earth's axis varies, your dark central cone
Wavers, a candle's shadow, at the end

WILLIAM EMPSON

NIGHTPIECE

THREE men came talking up the road
And still "tomorrow" was the word

The night was clear with the lamps' glitter
The first man spoke and his voice was bitter,

"Tomorrow like another day
I draw the dole and rust away "

The second one said scared and low,
"Tomorrow I may have to go "

And the two spoke never another word
But drew together and looked at the third,

And the third man said, "If tomorrow exists,
It's a day of streets like rivers of fists,

It's the end of crawling, the end of doles,
And men are treated as human souls "

I stood in the doorway and heard these things
As the three came past with the step of kings

JOHN MANIFOLD

PITY THIS BUSY MONSTER, MANUNKIND

pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not Progress is a comfortable disease
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness
—electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountainrange, lenses extend

unwish through curving wherever till unwish
returns on its unself

A world of made
is not a world of born—pity poor flesh

and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this
fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence We doctors know

a hopeless case if—listen there's a hell
of a good universe next door, let's go

E E CUMMINGS

VOLTAIRE AT FERNEY

PERFECTLY happy now, he looked at his estate
An exile making watches glanced up as he passed
And went on working, where a hospital was rising fast,
A joiner touched his cap, an agent came to tell
Some of the trees he'd planted were progressing well
The white alps glittered It was summer He was very
great

Far off in Paris where his enemies
Whispered that he was wicked, in an upright chair
A blind old woman longed for death and letters He would
write,
"Nothing is better than life " But was it? Yes, the fight
Against the false and the unfair
Was always worth it So was gardening Civilize

Cajoling, scolding, scheming, cleverest of them all,
He'd had the other children in a holy war
Against the infamous grown-ups, and, like a child, been
sly
And humble, when there was occasion for
The two-faced answer or the plain protective lie,
But, patient like a peasant, waited for their fall

And never doubted, like D'Alembert, he would win
Only Pascal was a great enemy, the rest
Were rats already poisoned, there was much, though, to
be done,
And only himself to count upon
Dear Diderot was dull but did his best,
Rousseau, he'd always known, would blubber and give in

Night fell and made him think of women Lust
Was one of the great teachers, Pascal was a fool
How Emilie had loved astronomy and bed,
Pimpette had loved him too, like scandal, he was glad
He'd done his share of weeping for Jerusalem As a rule,
It was the pleasure-haters who became unjust

Yet, like a sentinel, he could not sleep The night was full
of wrong,
Earthquakes and executions Soon he would be dead,
And still all over Europe stood the horrible nurses
Itching to boil their children Only his verses
Perhaps could stop them He must go on working Over-
head,
The uncomplaining stars composed their lucid song

W H AUDEN

SUNDAY MORNING

I

COMPLACENCIES of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights
The pungent oranges and bright, green wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water, without sound
The day is like wide water, without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulchre

II

Why should she give her bounty to the dead?
What is divinity if it can come
Only in silent shadows and in dreams?
Shall she not find in comforts of the sun,
In pungent fruit and bright, green wings, or else
In any balm or beauty of the earth,
Things to be cherished like the thought of heaven?
Divinity must live within herself
Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow,
Grievings in loneliness, or unsubdued
Elations when the forest blooms, gusty
Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights,

All pleasures and all pains, remembering
The bough of summer and the winter branch
These are the measures destined for her soul

III

Jove in the clouds had his inhuman birth
No mother suckled him, no sweet land gave
Large-mannered motions to his mythy mind
He moved among us, as a mutttering king,
Magnificent, would move among his hinds,
Until our blood, commingling, virginal,
With heaven, brought such requital to desire
The very hinds discerned it, in a star
Shall our blood fail? Or shall it come to be
The blood of paradise? And shall the earth
Seem all of paradise that we shall know?
The sky will be much friendlier then than now,
A part of labor and a part of pain,
And next in glory to enduring love,
Not this dividing and indifferent blue

IV

She says, "I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings,
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary south, nor cloudy palm
Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured

As April's green endures, or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By the consummation of the swallow's wings

V

She says, "But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss"
Death is the mother of beauty, hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
And our desires Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths,
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness,
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet
She causes boys to pile new plums and pears
On disregarded plate The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves

VI

Is there no change of death in paradise?
Does ripe fruit never fall? Or do the boughs
Hang always heavy in that perfect sky,
Unchanging, yet so like our perishing earth,
With rivers like our own that seek for seas
They never find, the same receding shores
That never touch with inarticulate pang?
Why set the pear upon those river-banks
Or spice the shores with odors of the plum?
Alas, that they should wear our colors there

The silken weavings of our afternoons,
And pick the strings of our insipid lutes!
Death is the mother of beauty, mystical,
Within whose burning bosom we devise
Our earthly mothers waiting, sleeplessly

VII

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky,
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like serafim, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn
And whence they came and whither they shall go
The dew upon their feet shall manifest

VIII

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries, "The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay"
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail

Whistle about us their spontaneous cries,
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness,
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings

WALLACE STEVENS

SONG OF A MAN WHO HAS COME THROUGH

NOT I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the
chaos of the world
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted,
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows,
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall
find the Hesperides

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression

What is the knocking?
What is the knocking at the door in the night?
It is somebody wants to do us harm

No, no, it is the three strange angels
Admit them, admit them

D H LAWRENCE

NEWS FOR THE DELPHIC ORACLE

I

THERE all the golden codgers lay,
There the silver dew,
And the great water sighed for love,
And the wind sighed too
Man-picker Niamh leant and sighed
By Oisín on the grass,
There sighed amid his choir of love
Tall Pythagoras
Plotinus came and looked about,
The salt-flakes on his breast,
And having stretched and yawned awhile
Lay sighing like the rest

II

Straddling each a dolphin's back
And steadied by a fin,
Those Innocents re-live their death,
Their wounds open again
The ecstatic waters laugh because
Their cries are sweet and strange,
Through their ancestral patterns dance,
And the brute dolphins plunge
Until, in some cliff-sheltered bay
Where wades the choir of love
Proffering its sacred laurel crowns,
They pitch their burdens off

III

Slim adolescence that a nymph has stripped,
Peleus on Thetis stares
Her limbs are delicate as an eyelid,
Love has blinded him with tears,
But Thetis' belly listens
Down the mountain walls
From where Pan's cavern is
Intolerable music falls
Foul goat-head, brutal arm appear,
Belly, shoulder, bum,
Flash fishlike, nymphs and satyrs
Copulate in the foam

W B YEATS

BYZANTIUM

THE unpurged images of day recede,
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed,
Night resonance recedes, night-walkers' song
After great cathedral gong,
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins

Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade,
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path,
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon,
I hail the superhuman,
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come

And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve

Astraddle on the dolphin's mure and blood,
Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood,
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea

W B YEATS

PROCNE

So she became a bird and bird-like danced
On a long sloe-bough, treading the silver blossom
With a bird's lovely feet,
And shaken blossoms fell into the hands
Of sunlight, and he held them for a moment
And let them drop
And in the autumn Procne came again
And leapt upon the crooked sloe-bough singing
And the dark berries winked like earth-dimmed beads,
As the branch swung beneath her dancing feet

PETER QUENNELL

PERSPECTIVES ARE PRECIPICES

*Sister Anne, Sister Anne,
Do you see anybody coming?*

I see a distance of black yews
Long as the history of the Jews

I see a road sunned with white sand
Wide plains surrounding silence And

Far-off, a broken colonnade
That overthrows the sun with shade

*Sister Anne, Sister Anne,
Do you see nobody coming?*

A man

Upon that road a man who goes
Dragging a shadow by its toes

Diminishing he goes, head bare
Of any covering, even hair

A pitcher depending from one hand
Goes mouth down And dry is sand

*Sister Anne, Sister Anne,
What do you see?*

His dwindling stride And he seems blind
Or worse to the prone man behind

Sister Anne! Sister Anne!

I see a road Beyond nowhere
Defined by cirrus and blue air

I saw a man but he is gone
His shadow gone into the sun

JOHN PEALE BISHOP

LEDA AND THE SWAN

A SUDDEN blow the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

W B YEATS

THE DISTANT RUNNERS

*Six great horses of Spain, set free
after his death by De Soto's men, ran
West and restored to America the wild
race lost there some thousands of
years ago* —A legend

FERDINAND De Soto lies
Soft again in river mud
Birds again, as on the day
Of his descending, rise and go
Straightly West, and do not know
Of feet beneath that faintly thud

If I were there in other time,
Between the proper sky and stream,
If I were there and saw the six
Abandoned manes, and rang along,
I could sing the fetlock song
That now is chilled within a dream

Ferdinand De Soto, sleeping
In the river, never heard
Four-and-twenty Spanish hooves
Fling off their iron and cut the green,
Leaving circles new and clean
While overhead the wing-tips whirled

Neither I nor any walker
By the Mississippi now
Can see the dozen nostrils open
Half in pain for death of men—
But half in gladness, neighing then
As loud as loping would allow

On they rippled, tail and back,
A prairie day, and swallows knew
A dark, uneven current there
But not a sound came up the wind,
And toward the night their shadow thinned
Before the black that flooded through

If I were there to bend and look,
The sky would know them as they sped
And turn to see But I am here,
And they are far, and time is old
Within my dream the grass is cold,
The legs are locked, the sky is dead

MARK VAN DOREN

PERSEUS

BORROWED wings on his ankles
Carrying a stone death
The hero entered the hall,
All in the hall looked up
Their breath frozen on them
And there was no more shuffle or clatter in the hall at all

So a friend of a man comes in
And leaves a book he is lending or flowers
And goes again, alive but as good as dead,
And you are left alive, no better than dead,
And you dare not turn the leaden pages of the book or
touch the flowers, the hooded and arrested hours

Close your eyes,
There are suns beneath your lids
Or look in the looking-glass in the end room
You will find it full of eyes
The ancient smiles of men cut out with scissors and kept
in mirrors

Ever to meet me comes, in sun or dull,
The gay hero swinging the Gorgon's head
And I am left, with the dull drumming of the sun sus-
pended and dead
Or the dumb grey-brown of the day is a leper's cloth
And one feels the earth going round and round the globe
of the blackening mantle, a mad moth

LOUIS MACNEICE

ALADDIN AND THE JINN

"BRING me soft song," said Aladdin
"This tailor-shop sings not at all
Chant me a word of the twilight,
Of roses that mourn in the fall
Bring me a song like hashish
That will comfort the stale and the sad,
For I would be mending my spirit,
Forgetting these days that are bad,
Forgetting companions too shallow,
Their quarrels and arguments thin,
Forgetting the shouting Muezzin"—
"I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn

"Bring me old wines," said Aladdin
"I have been a starved pauper too long
Serve them in vessels of jade and of shell,
Serve them with fruit and with song —
Wines of pre-Adamite Sultans
Dugged from beneath the black seas —
New-gathered dew from the heavens
Dripped down from Heaven's sweet trees,
Cups from the angels' pale tables
That will make me both handsome and wise,
For I have beheld her, the princess,
Firelight and starlight her eyes
Pauper I am, I would woo her
And—let me drink wine, to begin,
Though the Koran expressly forbids it "
"I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn

"Plan me a dome," said Aladdin,
"That is drawn like the dawn of the MOON,
When the sphere seems to rest on the mountains,
Half-hidden, yet full-risen soon
Build me a dome," said Aladdin,
"That shall cause all young lovers to sigh,
The fullness of life and of beauty,
Peace beyond peace to the eye—
A palace of foam and of opal,
Pure moonlight without and within,
Where I may enthrone my sweet lady "
"I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn

VACHEL LINDSAY

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

WITHIN Heaven's circle I had not guessed at this,
I had not guessed at pleasure such as this,
So sharp a pleasure,
That, like a lamp burning in foggy night,
Makes its own orb and sphere of flowing gold
And tents itself in light

Going before you, now how many days,
Thoughts, all turned back like birds against the wind,
Wheeled sullenly towards my Father's house,
Considered his blind presence and the gathered, bustling
pæan,
The affluence of his sweetness, his grace and unaging
might

My flesh glowed then in the shadow of a loose cloak
And my brightness troubled the ground with every pulse
of the blood,
My wings lax on the air, my eyes open and grave,
With the vacant pride of hardly less than a god

We passed thickets that quaked with hidden deer,
And wide shallows dividing before my feet,
Empty plains threaded, and between stiff aloes
I took the ass's bridle to climb into mountain pathways

When cold bit you, through your peasant's mantle,
And my Father filled the air with meaningless stars,
I brought dung and dead white grass for fuel,
Blowing a fire with the breath of the holy word

Your drudge, Joseph, slept, you would sit unmoving,
In marble quiet, or by the unbroken voice of a river,

Would sometimes bare your maiden breast to his mouth,
The suckling to the conscious God balanced upon your
knees

Apart I considered the melodious names of my brothers,
As again in my Father's house, and the even spheres
Slowly, nightlong recalled the splendour of numbers,
I heard again the voluptuous measure of praise

Sometimes pacing beneath clarity immeasurable
I saw my mind lie open and desert,
The wavering streams frozen up and each coppice
quieted,
A whole valley in starlight with leaves and waters

Coming at last to these farthest Syrian hills,
Attis or Adon, some ambushed lust looked out,
My skin grows pale and smooth, shrunken as silk,
Without the rough effulgence of a God

And here no voice has spoken,
There is no shrine of any godhead here
No grove or hallowed fires,
And godhead seems asleep

Only the vine has woven
Strange houses and blind rooms and palaces,
Into each hollow and crevice continually
Dropped yearlong irrecoverable flowers

The sprawling vine has built us a close room
Obedient Hymen fills the air with mist,
And to make dumb our theft
The white and moving sand that will not bear a print

PETER QUENNELL

C L M

IN the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her
Down in the darkness of the grave
She cannot see the life she gave
For all her love, she cannot tell
Whether I use it ill or well,
Nor knock at dusty doors to find
Her beauty dusty in the mind
If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown If we should meet,
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me
What have I done to keep in mind
My debt to her and womankind ?
What woman's happier life repays
Her for those months of wretched days ?
For all my mouthless body leech'd
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reach'd ?
What have I done, or tried, or said
In thanks to that dear woman dead ?
Men triumph over women still,
Men trample women's rights at will,
And man's lust roves the world untamed
O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed

JOHN MASEFIELD

SONNET TO MY MOTHER

MOST near, most dear, most loved and most far,
Under the window where I often found her
Sitting as huge as Asia, seismic with laughter,
Gin and chicken helpless in her Irish hand,
Irresistible as Rabelais but most tender for
The lame dogs and hurt birds that surround her,—
She is a procession no one can follow after
But be like a little dog following a brass band

She will not glance up at the bomber or condescend
To drop her gin and scuttle to a cellar,
But lean on the mahogany table like a mountain
Whom only faith can move, and so I send
O all my faith and all my love to tell her
That she will move from mourning into morning

GEORGE BARKER

FATHER AND SON

ONLY last week, walking the hushed fields
Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,
I came to where the road from Laracor leads
To the Boyne river—that seemed more lake than river,
Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds

And walking longside an old weir
Of my people's, where nothing stir—only the shadowed
Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air—
I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,
Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day
He walked, taking stock of herds hid in their own breath-
ing,
And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his
hand
Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half sky in
greeting
Old friends—the wild blades, when he gallivanted the
land

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks—
Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,
Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,
Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly
loved me
Till Death drew its grey blind down his face

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways
Are living shades of his rich calms and passions—
Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes
With whom now he is one, under yew branches,
Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks

F R HIGGINS

LITTLE BOY BLUE

HE rubbed his eyes and wound the silver horn
Then the continuum was cracked and torn
With tumbling imps of music being born

The blowsy sheep lethargic on the ground
Suddenly burned where no fire could be found
And straight up stood their fleeces every pound

The old bellwether rose and rang his bell,
The seven-days' lambs went skipping and skipped well,
And Baa Baa Baa, the flock careered pellmell

The yellow cows that milked the savoury cud
Propped on the green grass or the yellow mud
Felt such a tingle in their lady blood,

They ran and tossed their hooves and horns of blue
And jumped the fence and gambolled kangaroo,
Divinely singing as they wandered Moo

A plague on such a shepherd of the sheep
That careless boy with pretty cows to keep!
With such a burden I should never sleep

But when his notes had run around the sky,
When they proceeded to grow faint and die,
He stuffed his horn with straw and put it by

And when the legs were tired beneath the sheep
And there were spent and sleepy cows to keep,
He rubbed his eyes again and went to sleep

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

FOR A CHILD EXPECTED

LOVERS whose lifted hands are candles in winter,
Whose gentle ways like streams in the easy summer,
Lying together
For secret setting of a child, love what they do,
Thinking they make that candle immortal, those streams
forever flow,
And yet do better than they know

So the first flutter of a baby felt in the womb,
Its little signal and promise of riches to come,
Is taken in its father's name,
Its life is the body of his love, like his caress,
First delicate and strange, that daily use
Makes dearer and priceless

Our baby was to be the living sign of our joy,
Restore to each the other's lost infancy,
To a painter's pillaging eye
Poet's coiled hearing, add the heart we might earn
By help of love, all that our passion would yield
We put to planning our child

The world flowed in, whatever we liked we took
For his hair, the gold curls of the November oak
We saw on our walk,
Snowberries that make a Milky Way in the wood
For its tender hands, calm screen of the frozen flood
For our care of its childhood

But the birth of a child is an uncontrollable glory
Cat's cradle of hopes will hold no living baby,

Long though it lay quietly
And when our baby stirs and struggles to be born
It compels humility what we began
Is now its own

*For as the sun that shines through glass
So Jesus in His Mother was*
Therefore every human creature,
Since it shares in His nature,
In candle gold passion or white
Sharp star should show its own way of light
May no parental dread or dream
Darken our darling's early beam
May she grow to her right powers
Unperturbed by passion of ours

ANNE RIDLER

THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries,
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest

"Will ye not come home, brother? ye have been long
away,
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the may,

And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain,—
Will ye not come home, brother, home to us again ?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run,
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green
wheat,
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your tired
feet ?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching
eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries

It's the white road westwards is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and
head,
To the violets and the warm hearts and the thrushes' song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong

JOHN MASEFIELD

SONNET

Is there a great green commonwealth of Thought
Which ranks the yearly pageant, and decides
How Summer's royal progress shall be wrought,
By secret stir which in each plant abides ?
Does rocking daffodil consent that she,
The snow drop of wet winters, shall be first ?
Does spotted cowslip with the grass agree

To hold her pride before the rattle burst?
And in the hedge what quick agreement goes,
When hawthorn blossoms redden to decay,
That Summer's pride shall come, the Summer's rose,
Before the flower be on the bramble spray?
Or is it, as with us, unresting strife,
And each consent a lucky gasp for life?

JOHN MASEFIELD

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE

Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion

HA' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he

Oh we drunk his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere,
But a man o' men was he

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury

They'll no' get him a' in a book, I think,
Though they write it cunningly,
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree "

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he
"Ye shall see one thing to master all
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree "

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
I have seen him upon the tree

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue,
But never a cry cried he

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the gray o' the sea

Nor ⁴secret love, escape or sleep because
No matter what I do, he looks at it—”

“Now,” said the third, “no thing will be the same.
I am as one who never shuts his eyes,
The sea and sky no more are marvellous,
And I no longer understand surprise!”

“Now,” said the fourth, “nothing will be enough,
—I heard his voice accomplishing all wit
No word can be unsaid, no deed withdrawn,
—No matter what is said, he measures it!”

“Vision, imagination, hope or dream
Believed, denied, the scene we wished to see?
It does not matter in the least for what
Is altered if it is not true? That we
Saw goodness, as it is—*this* is the awe
And the abyss which we will not forget,
His story now the skull which holds all thought
No matter what I think, I think of it!”

“And I will never be what once I was,”
Said one for long as single as a knife,
“And we will never be as once we were,
We have died once, this is a second life”
“My mind is spilled in moral chaos,” one
Righteous as Job exclaimed, “now infinite
Suspicion of my heart stems what I will,
—No matter what I choose, he stares at it!”

“I am as one native in summer places,
—Ten weeks’ excitement paid for by the rich,
Debauched by that, and then all winter bored,”
The sixth declared, “his peak left us a ditch”
“He came to make this life more difficult,”

The seventh said, "No one will ever fit
His measures' heights, all is inadequate
No matter what we have, what good is it?"

He gave forgiveness to us what a gift!"
The eighth chimed in, "But now we know *how much*
Must be forgiven But if forgiven, what?
The crime which was will be, and the least touch
Revives the memory what is forgiveness worth?"
The ninth spoke thus "Who now will ever sit
At ease in Zion at the Easter feast?
No matter what the place, he touches it!"

"And I will always stammer, since he spoke,"
One, who had been most eloquent, said, stammering
"I looked too long at the sun, like too much light,
Too much of goodness is a boomerang,"
Laughed the eleventh of the troop "I must
Try what he tried I saw the infinite
Who walked the lake and raised the hopeless dead
No matter what the feat, he has accomplished it!"

So spoke the twelfth, and then the twelve in chorus
"Unspeakable unnatural goodness is
Risen and shines, and never will ignore us,
He glows forever in all consciousness,
Forgiveness, love, and hope possess the pit,
And bring our endless guilt, like shadow's bars
No matter what we do, he stares at it!
What pity then deny, what debt defer?
We know he looks at us like all the stars,
And we shall never be as once we were,
This life will never be what once it was!"

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE LAST SUPPER

I

APOSTLES of the hidden sun
Are come unto the room of breath
Hung with the banging blinds of death,
The body twelve, the spirit one,
Far as the eye, in earth arrayed,
The night shining, the supper laid

II

The wine shone on the table that evening of history
Like an enormous ruby in the bauble and mystery

In the glowing walls of the flickering decanter
There moved His face as at the world's center

The hands of Judas showed up red and hurried
And the light hit them so, like a cross carried

The faces of the others were there and moving
In the crystal of the dome, swiftly hovering

The saints, under a lens, shrunken to pigmies,
Gesticulated in birds or in colored enigmas

Outside there was a storm, the sound of temblors,
The blood bubbled and sprang into the tumblers

When the morning came like a white wall of stone,
The day lay in the glass and the blood was gone

OSCAR WILLIAMS

SONNETS AT CHRISTMAS

I

THIS is the day His hour of life draws near,
Let me get ready from head to foot for it
Most handily with eyes to pick the year
For small feed to reward a feathered wit
Some men would see it an epiphany
At ease, at food and drink, others at chase
Yet I, stung lassitude, with ecstasy
Unspent argue the season's difficult case
So Man, dull critter of enormous head,
What would he look at in the coiling sky?
But I must kneel again unto the Dead
While Christmas bells of paper white and red,
Figured with boys and girls spilt from a sled,
Ring out the silence I am nourished by

II

Ah, Christ, I love you rings to the wild sky
And I must think a little of the past
When I was ten I told a stinking lie
That got a black boy whipped, but now at last
The going years, with an accurate glow,
Reverse like balls englished upon green baize—
Let them return, let the round trumpets blow
The ancient crackle of the Christ's deep gaze
Deafened and blind, with senses yet unfound,
Am I, untutored to the after-wit

Of knowledge, knowing a nightmare has no sound,
Therefore with idle hands and head I sit
In late December before the fire's daze
Punished by crimes of which I would be quit

ALLEN TATE

MORE SONNETS AT CHRISTMAS

Ten Years Later

I

AGAIN the native hour lets down the locks
Uncombed and black, but gray the bobbing beard,
Ten years ago His eyes, fierce shuttlecocks,
Pierced the close net of what I failed I feared
The belly-cold, the grave-clout, that betrayed
Me dithering in the rift of cordial seas,
Ten years is time enough to be dismayed
By mummy Christ, head crammed between his knees

Suppose I take an arrogant bomber, stroke
By stroke, up to the frazzled sun to hear
Sun-ghostlings whisper Yes, the capital yoke—
Remove it and there's not a ghost to fear
This crucial day, whose decapitate joke
Languidly winds into the inner ear

II

The day's at end and there's nowhere to go,
Draw to the fire, even this fire is dying,
Get up and once again politely lying
Invite the ladies toward the mistletoe
With greedy eyes that stare like an old crow
How pleasantly the holly wreaths did hang
And how stuffed Santa did his reindeer clang
Above the golden oaken mantel, years ago !

Then hang this picture for a calendar,
As sheep for goat, and pray most fixedly
For the cold martial progress of your star,
With thoughts of commerce and society,
Well-milked Chinese, Negroes who cannot sing,
The Huns gelded and feeding in a ring

III

Give me this day a faith not personal
As follows The American people fully armed
With assurance policies, righteous and harmed,
Battle the world of which they're not at all
That lying boy of ten who stood in the hall,
His hat in hand (thus by his father charmed
"You may be President"), was not alarmed
Nor even left uneasy by his fall

Nobody said that he could be a plumber,
Carpenter, clerk, bus-driver, bombardier,
Let little boys go into violent slumber,
Aegean squall and squalor where their fear
Is of an enemy in remote oceans
Unstalked by Christ these are the better notions

Citizen, myself, or personal friend,
 Your ghosts are Plato's Christians in the cave
 Unfix your necks, turn to the door, the nave
 Gives back the cheated and light dividend
 So long sequestered, now, new-rich, you'll spend
 Flesh for reality inside a stone
 Whose light obstruction, like a gossamer bone,
 Dead or still living, will not break or bend

Thus light, your flesh made pale and sinister
 And put off like a dog that's had his day,
 You will be Plato's kept philosopher,
 Albino man bleached from the mortal clay,
 Mild-mannered, gifted in your master's ease
 While the sun squats upon the waveless seas

ALLEN TATE

THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS EVE, and twelve of the clock,
 "Now they are all on their knees,"
 An elder said as we sat in a flock
 By the embers in hearthside ease

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
 They dwelt in their strawy pen,
 Nor did it occur to one of us there
 To doubt they were kneeling then

So fair & fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come, see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so

THOMAS HARDY

SWEDISH ANGEL

THE Swedish angel is nine inches high and shaped all of
blonde straw
All of blonde straw is her little body and her great seven-
inch wings
Her small head is of painted wood and she stands on a
slim wood base
Shining and shining in the Christmas candles, shines her
golden halo

Even all round her is a kind of shining, circle on circle,
because
She has—it seems—lighted upon a round lake of clear
glass
Surrounded by ground-pine and red berries which gleam
also
In the candlelight that moves on her stilled blonde wings

In this immaculate doll of heaven has been conceived, as
though

No hands had shaped her, an uninvented innocence be-
queathing grace
Ring upon ring in haloes all around her, and not remote
nor kind
But only there, dispensing of all the brought light a total
larger light

Even now her wings have assumed such shields of glory
and the pool beneath
Wheels with such wreaths of shining, the room is gath-
ered and filled
By her tall and burning stillness and, an actual angel,
her suspension wars
For a whole minute against all the dark, as if I were a
child

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

EVERY EARTHLY CREATURE

THE shifty limpet on his rocky shore
Contrives a conch to make life possible,
And the unbelievable giraffe achieves
A dainty salad from the lissom tree,
Pretending he is flora in the pond,
A silly fish will emulate a frond
To trick the appetite that savors him,
A rabbit in the snow will do the same

Like tinted views from a dismantled fair,
These illustrations fail, being outworn,
Who would erect a summerhouse or myth
To shade him from the elements of love
Is naked of resource, since love like fate,
Omnipotent and unregenerate,
Keeps calendars that are a joke of time,
The newest grief retells the oldest theme

Since war, the matter of a generation,
Blunts as it must the savior and the fool,
Fathers and sons in terror worlds apart
Communicate with pity and bare signs,
The accurate bombs that scatter sanity,
The child of Guernica who cannot see
That innocence is death, acquaints me now,
I have learned armor I would disavow

What grace survives the city's glass and stone,
What facet points the cosmopolitan ?
To eke a diamond from its mineral floor
Earth rakes its faculty for quake and tide,
Yet in the city's blaze the millions go
From crib to crypt, nor any gem to show
Ah, there the heart of man knows less itself
Than the least pink shell upon a watery shelf

Like feathers on a swan, indifference coats
The reptile remnant of our primacy,
Debauched of tongue in time's slow sabotage,
Both tragedy and outrage come to ash,
Then is the heart adaptable to death
And creatures who employ the earth, and breathe
The vivid air, ascend, superior,
Who comes to his instruction, stays to fear

The sun of Genesis is shining still,
Though God is shifted to his place in time,
May evil, here, pace like the captured leopard
Where the good contends dynastically with good;
May earth in its success provide for all
Who lack the logic of the sorry snail,
Who die without a candle, or remain
To citizen the natural state of man

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

from THE KINGDOM

I

UNDER the surface of flux and of fear there is an underground movement,
Under the crust of bureaucracy, quiet behind the posters,
Unconscious but palpably there—the Kingdom of individuals

And of these is the Kingdom—
Equal in difference, interchangeably sovereign—
The incorruptible souls who work without a commission,
The pairs of hands that are peers of hearts, the eyes that marry with eyes,
The candid scholar, the unselfish priest, the uncomplaining mothers of many,
The active men who are kind, the contemplative who give,
The happy-go-lucky saint and the peace-loving buccaneer

These, as being themselves, are apart from not each other
But from such as being false are merely other,
So these are apart as parts within a pattern
Not merged nor yet excluded, members of a Kingdom
Which has no king except each subject, therefore
Apart from slaves and tyrants and from every
Community of mere convenience, these are
Apart from those who drift and those who force,
Apart from partisan order and egotistical anarchy,
Apart from the easy religion of him who would find in
God

A boss, a ponce, an alibi, and apart from
The logic of him who arrogates to himself
The secret of the universe, the whole
Choreography of atoms, these are humble
And proud at once, working within their limits
And yet transcending them These are the people
Who vindicate the species And they are many For go,
Go wherever you choose, among tidy villas or terrible
Docks, dumps and pitheads, or through the spangled
moors
Or along the vibrant narrow intestines of great ships
Or into those countries of which we know very little—
Everywhere you will discover the men of the Kingdom
Loyal by intuition, born to attack, and innocent

II

Over the roofs and cranes, blistered cupola and hungry
smoke-stack, over the moored balloons and the feathery
tufts of searchlights,
Over the cold transmitters jabbering under the moon,
Over the hump of the ocean big with wrecks and over
Our hide-bound fog-bound lives the hosts of the living
collect
Like migrant birds, or bees to the sound of a gong
Subjects all of the Kingdom but each in himself a king
These are the people who know in their bones the answer
To the statesman's quiz and the false reformers crude
Alternatives and ultimatums These have eyes
And can see each other's goodness, do not need salvation
By whip, brochure, sterilisation or drugs,
Being incurably human, these are the catalytics
To break the inhuman into humanity, these are
The voices whose words, whether in code or in clear,
Are to the point and can be received apart from

The buzz of jargon Apart from the cranks, the timid,
The self-deceiving realist, the self-seeking
Altruist, the self-indulgent penitent,
Apart from all the frauds are these who have the courage
Of their own vision and their friends' good will
And have not lost their cosmic pride, responding
Both to the simple lyrics of blood and the architectonic
fugues of reason
These have their faults like all creators, like
The hero who must die or like the artist who
Himself is like a person with one hand
Working it into a glove, yes, they have faults
But are the chosen—because they have chosen, being
Beautiful if grotesque and wise though wilful
And hard as meteorites Of these, of such is
Your hope, your clue, your cue, your snowball letter
That makes your soft flakes hard, your aspirations active,
Of such is your future if it is to be fruitful,
Of such is your widow's cruse, your Jacob's ladder,
Of such is the garden of souls, the orchestration of in-
stinct,
The fertilisation of mind, of such are your beacons,
Your breaking of bread, your dance of desire, your North-
West passage,
Of such is the epilogue to your sagas of bronze and steel,
Your amnesty, your advent, your Rebirth,
The archetype and the vindication of history,
The hierarchy of the equal—the Kingdom of Earth

LOUIS MACNEICE

II

A Little Treasury of Modern Light Verse

BAGPIPE MUSIC

It's no go the merry-go-round, it's no go the rickshaw,
All we want is a limousine and a ticket for the peepshow
Their knickers are made of crêpe-de-chine, their shoes
are made of python,
Their halls are lined with tiger rugs and their walls with
heads of bison

John MacDonald found a corpse, put it under the sofa,
Waited till it came to life and hit it with a poker,
Sold its eyes for souvenirs, sold its blood for whiskey,
Kept its bones for dumb-bells to use when he was fifty

It's no go the Yogi-Man, it's no go Blavatsky,
All we want is a bank balance and a bit of skirt in a taxi

Annie MacDougall went to milk, caught her foot in the
heather,
Woke to hear a dance record playing of Old Vienna
It's no go your maidenheads, it's no go your culture,
All we want is a Dunlop tyre and the devil mend the
puncture

The laird o'Phelps spent Hogmannay declaring he was
sober,
Counted his feet to prove the fact and found he had one
foot over
Mrs Carmichael had her fifth, looked at the job with
repulsion,
Said to the midwife 'Take it away, I'm through with
overproduction'

It's no go the gossip column, it's no go the Ceilidh,
All we want is a mother's help and a sugar-stick for the
baby

Willie Murray cut his thumb, couldn't count the damage,
Took the hide of an Ayrshire cow and used it for a
bandage

His brother caught three hundred cran when the seas
were lavish,
Threw the bleeders back in the sea and went upon the
parish

It's no go the Herring Board, it's no go the Bible,
All we want is a packet of fags when our hands are idle

It's no go the picture palace, it's no go the stadium,
It's no go the country cot with a pot of pink geraniums
It's no go the Government grants, it's no go the elections,
Sit on your arse for fifty years and hang your hat on a
pension

It's no go my honey love, it's no go my poppet,
Work your hands from day to day, the winds will blow
the profit
The glass is falling hour by hour, the glass will fall for-
ever,
But if you break the bloody glass you won't hold up the
weather

LOUIS MACNEICE

SONG FOR THE CLATTER-BONES

GOD rest that Jewy woman,
Queen Jezebel, the bitch
Who peeled the clothes from her shoulder-bones
Down to her spent teats
As she stretched out of the window
Among the geraniums, where
She chaffed and laughed like one half daft
Titivating her painted hair—

King Jehu he drove to her,
She tipped him a fancy beck,
But he from his knacky side-car spoke,
“Who’ll break that dewlapped neck?”
And so she was thrown from the window,
Like Lucifer she fell
Beneath the feet of the horses and they beat
The light out of Jezebel

That corpse wasn’t planted in clover,
Ah, nothing of her was found
Save those grey bones that Hare-foot Mike
Gave me for their lovely sound,
And as once her dancing body
Made star-lit princes sweat,
So I’ll just clack though her ghost lacks a back
There’s music in the old bones yet

F R HIGGINS

ANCIENT MUSIC

WINTER is icumen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
And how the wind doth ramm!
Sing Goddamm
Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham
Freezeth river, turneth liver,
Damn you, sing Goddamm
Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm
Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm,
Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM

EZRA POUND

TO A FAT LADY SEEN FROM THE TRAIN

O WHY do you walk through the fields in gloves,
Missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves
And shivering-sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
Missing so much and so much

FRANCES CORNFORD

NOBODY LOSES ALL THE TIME

nobody loses all the time

i had an uncle named
Sol who was a born failure and
nearly everybody said he should have gone
into vaudeville perhaps my Uncle Sol could
sing McCann He Was A Diver on Xmas Eve like Hell
itself which
may or may not account for the fact that my Uncle

Sol indulged in that possibly most inexcusable
of all to use a highfalootin phrase
luxuries that is or to
wit farming and be
it needlessly
added

my Uncle Sol's farm
failed because the chickens
ate the vegetables so
my Uncle Sol had a
chicken farm till the
skunks ate the chickens when

my Uncle Sol
had a skunk farm but
the skunks caught cold and
died and so
my Uncle Sol imitated the
skunks in a subtle manner

or by drowning himself in the watertank
but somebody who'd given my Uncle Sol a Victor
Victrola and records while he lived presented to
him upon the auspicious occasion of his decease a
scrumptious not to mention splendiferous funeral with
tall boys in black gloves and flowers and everything and

i remember we all cried like the Missouri
when my Uncle Sol's coffin lurched because
somebody pressed a button
(and down went
my uncle
Sol

and started a worm farm)

E E CUMMINGS

"NEXT TO OF COURSE GOD

"next to of course god america i
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh
say can you see by the dawn's early my
country 'tis of centuries come and go
and are no more what of it we should worry
in every language even deafanddumb
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorrry
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-
iful than these heroic happy dead
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
they did not stop to think they died instead
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

He spoke And drank rapidly a glass of water

E E CUMMINGS

FARMHANDS' REFRAIN

You Repocrat squires in the Farm Bureau,
You Demirep lairds in the Grange,
Your bigness content with the *status quo*
And alarmed at the rumblings of Change,
We'll never go fascist to froth and kill
For assuring the girth of your belts
Not ours, not ours the farms we till,
We're working for somebody else—

Ranging somebody else's ownsome ground,
Lacking somebody else's thrill,
Haunting somebody else's too profound,
Just a-ghosting for somebody else !

We hirelings and sharecroppers here below,
You thanes with your organized Front,
We waking at last with the See-Eye-Oh,
You in dread of an organized brunt,
We'd languish till Gabriel ends it all,
Should we wait till your apathy melts
Not ours, not ours the creed you bawl,
We're working for somebody else—

Planting somebody else's ownsome Spring,
Reaping somebody else's Fall,
Making somebody else's proudness ring,
Just a-serfing for somebody else !

For you—all these versions of A A A ,
More money on top of your means
For us—yet the paltry six bits a day,
Through winter for bedding and beans

No matter how far from the Dixon line,
How unAfric the shade of our pelts
Not ours, not ours your class-combine,
We're working for somebody else—

Milking somebody else's ownsome cow,
Calling somebody else's swine,
Doing somebody else's chores, and how,
Just a-being for somebody else!

Our neighbors in Russia "belong" at least,
No landlord impugning their worth,
Have much consolation of goods increased,
If not the sole havings of earth
But here against "Liberty's" lines and bars,
What here on the chattelized veldts?
Not ours, not ours the homes and cars,
We're working for somebody else—

Breathing somebody else's ownsome air,
Counting somebody else's stars,
Finding somebody else's god up there
Just a-ghosting for somebody else!

H H LEWIS

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

LET me take this other glove off
As the *vox humana* swells,
And the beauteous fields of Eden
Bask beneath the Abbey bells

Here, where England's statesmen lie,
Listen to a lady's cry

Gracious Lord, oh bomb the Germans
Spare their women for Thy Sake,
And if that is not too easy
We will pardon Thy Mistake
But, gracious Lord, whate'er shall be,
Don't let anyone bomb me

Keep our Empire undismembered
Guide our Forces by Thy Hand,
Gallant blacks from far Jamaica,
Honduras and Togoland,
Protect them, Lord, in all their fights,
And, even more, protect the whites

Think of what our Nation stands for,
Books from Boots' and country lanes,
Free speech, free passes, class distinction,
Democracy and proper drains
Lord, put beneath Thy special care
One-eighty-nine Cadogan Square

Although, dear Lord, I am a sinner,
I have done no major crime,
Now I'll come to Evening Service
Whensoever I have time
So, Lord, reserve for me a crown,
And do not let my shares go down

I will labour for Thy Kingdom,
Help our lads to win the war,
Send white feathers to the cowards,
Join the Women's Army Corps,

Then wash the Steps around Thy Throne
In the Eternal Safety Zone

Now I feel a little better,
What a treat to hear Thy Word,
Where the bones of leading statesmen,
Have so often been interr'd
And now, dear Lord, I cannot wait
Because I have a luncheon date

JOHN BETJEMAN

JOHN KINSELLA'S LAMENT FOR MRS MARY MOORE

A BLOODY and a sudden end,
Gunshot or a noose,
For death who takes what man would keep,
Leaves what man would lose
He might have had my sister,
My cousins by the score,
But nothing satisfied the fool
But my dear Mary Moore,
None other knows what pleasures man
At table or in bed
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now my old bawd is dead?

Though stiff to strike a bargain,
Like an old Jew man,
Her bargain struck we laughed and talked
And emptied many a can,

And O! but she had stories,
Though not for the priest's ear,
To keep the soul of man alive,
Banish age and care,
And being old she put a skin
On everything she said
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now my old bawd is dead?

The priests have got a book that says
But for Adam's sin
Eden's Garden would be there,
No pleasing habit ends,
No man grows old, no girl grows cold,
But friends walk by friends
Who quarrels over halfpennies
That plucks the trees for bread?
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now that my old bawd is dead?

W B YEATS

WINE AND WATER

OLD Noah he had an ostrich farm and fowls on the largest scale,
He ate his egg with a ladle in an egg-cup big as a pail,
And the soup he took was Elephant Soup and the fish he took was Whale,
But they all were small to the cellar he took when he set out to sail,

And Noah he often said to his wife when he sat down to
dine,
"I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into
the wine "

The cataract of the cliff of heaven fell blinding off the
brink
As if it would wash the stars away as suds go down a sink,
The seven heavens came roaring down for the throats of
hell to drink,
And Noah he cocked his eye and said, "It looks like rain,
I think,
The water has drowned the Matterhorn as deep as a
Mendip mine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into
the wine "

But Noah he sinned, and we have sinned, on tipsy feet
we trod,
Till a great big black teetotaller was sent to us for a rod,
And you can't get wine at a P S A , or chapel, or Eistedd-
fod,
For the Curse of Water has come again because of the
wrath of God,
And water is on the Bishop's board and the Higher
Thinker's shrine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get
into the wine

G K CHESTERTON

SO-AND-SO RECLINING ON HER COUCH

ON her side, reclining on her elbow
This mechanism, this apparition,
Suppose we call it Projection A

She floats in air at the level of
The eye, completely anonymous,
Born, as she was, at twenty-one,

Without lineage or language, only
The curving of her hip, as motionless gesture,
Eyes dripping blue, so much to learn

If just above her head there hung,
Suspended in air, the slightest crown
Of Gothic prong and practick bright,

The suspension, as in solid space,
The suspending hand withdrawn, would be
An invisible gesture Let this be called

Projection B To get at the thing
Without gestures is to get at it as
Idea She floats in the contention, the flux

Between the thing as idea and
The idea as thing She is half who made her
This is the final Projection, C

The arrangement contains the desire of
The artist But one confides in what has no
Concealed creator One walks easily

The unpainted shore, accepts the world
As anything but sculpture Good-bye,
Mrs Pappadopoulos, and thanks

WALLACE STEVENS

IT WAS A GOODLY CO

it was a goodly co
which paid to make man free
(for man is enslaved by a dread dizziz
and the sooner it's over the sooner to biz
don't ask me what it's pliz

then up rose bishop budge from kew
a anglican was who
(With a rag and a bone and a hank of hair)'d
he picked up a thousand pounds or two
and he smote the monster merde

then up rose pride and up rose pelf
and ghibelline and guelph
and ladios and laddios
(on radios and raddios)
did save man from himself

ye duskiest despot's goldenest gal
did wring that dragon's tail
(for men must loaf and women must lay)
and she gave him a desdemonial
that took his breath away

all history oped her teeming womb
said demon for to doom
yea (fresh complexions being oke
with him) one william shakespeare broke
the silence of the tomb

then up rose mr lipshits pres
(who always nothing says)
and he kissed the general menedjerr
and they smoked a robert burns cigerr
to the god of things like they err

E E CUMMINGS

CASEY JONES

CASEY JONES has left today,
The decision was made in a desperate way,
Short as a wire and quick as a plane
And he isn't going to see any of you again
There was no kind of good in staying on
When the delight was gone

His hand at the welding was unsteady for months,
And the boss came very near sacking him once
No rain for weeks, the old mower in pawn,
It was an impossible pastime cutting the lawn
There was no kind of good in staying on
When the delight was gone

Cries in the head were making him light,
He found it difficult sleeping at night,
The warmth of the women was a shocking reward,

And their unfortunate wishes were growing weird
There was no kind of good in staying on
When the delight was gone

O where did he head for? The wind in the wood,
And the goat on the tether was coughing up blood,
The clock on the church was pointing at ten
As he passed by the women and he left the men
There was no kind of good in staying on
When the delight was gone

O where was he going? He didn't quite know,
For vague as a bandage the infected go,
And the mind must follow the deceived decision
Of the night before and the dream's incision
There was no kind of good in staying on
When the delight was gone

E V SWART

A SEMI-REVOLUTION

I ADVOCATE a semi-revolution
The trouble with a total revolution
(Ask any reputable Rosicrucian)
Is that it brings the same class up on top
Executives of skillful execution
Will therefore plan to go half-way and stop
Yes, revolutions are the only salves,
But they're one thing that should be done by halves

ROBERT FROST

A TOTAL REVOLUTION

(An Answer for Robert Frost)

I ADVOCATE a total revolution
The trouble with a semi-revolution,
It's likely to be slow as evolution
Who wants to spend the ages in collusion
With Compromise, Complacence and Confusion?
As for the same class coming up on top
That's wholecloth from the propaganda shop,
The old saw says there's loads of room on top,
That's where the poor should really plan to stop
And speaking of those people called the "haves,"
Who own the whole cow and must have the calves
(And plant the wounds so they can sell the salves)
They won't be stopped by doing things by halves
I say that for a permanent solution
There's nothing like a total revolution!

P S And need I add by way of a conclusion
I wouldn't dream to ask a Rosicrucian

OSCAR WILLIAMS

MACAVITY THE MYSTERY CAT

MACAVITY's a Mystery Cat he's called the Hidden Paw—
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's
despair

For when they reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of
gravity
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*

You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in
the air—
But I tell you once and once again, *Macavity's not there!*

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin,
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are
sunken in
His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly
domed,
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are un-
combed
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like
a snake,
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide
awake

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity
You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the
square—
But when a crime's discovered, then *Macavity's not there!*

He's outwardly respectable (They say he cheats at
cards)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland
Yard's

And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been
stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past
repair—
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! *Macavity's not there!*

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the
way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—*Macavity's not there!*
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service
say
'It *must* have been Macavity!'—but he's a mile away
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his
thumbs,
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY
WASN'T THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are
widely known
(I might mention Mungorjerrie, I might mention Griddle-
bone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the
time
Just controls their operations the Napoleon of Crime!

T S ELIOT

THE LABYRINTH

*Anthropos apteros for days
Walked whistling round and round the Maze,
Relying happily upon
His temperament for getting on*

*The hundredth time he sighted, though,
A bush he left an hour ago,
He halted where four alleys crossed,
And recognised that he was lost*

“Where am I? Metaphysics says
No question can be asked unless
It has an answer, so I can
Assume this maze has got a plan

If theologians are correct,
A Plan implies an Architect
A god-built maze would be, I'm sure,
The Universe in miniature

Are data from the world of Sense,
In that case, valid evidence?
What in the universe I know
Can give directions how to go?

All Mathematics would suggest
A steady straight line as the best,
But left and right alternately
Is consonant with History

Æsthetics, though, believes all Art
Intends to gratify the Heart
Rejecting disciplines like these,
Must I, then, go which way I please?

Such reasoning is only true
If we accept the classic view,
Which we have no right to assert,
According to the Introvert

His absolute pre-supposition
Is—Man creates his own condition
This maze was not divinely built,
But is secreted by my guilt

The centre that I cannot find
Is known to my Unconscious Mind,
I have no reason to despair
Because I am already there

My problem is how *not* to will,
They move most quickly who stand still,
I'm only lost until I see
I'm lost because I want to be

If this should fail, perhaps I should,
As certain educators would,
Content myself with the conclusion,
In theory there is no solution

All statements about what I feel,
Like I-am-lost, are quite unreal
My knowledge ends where it began,
A hedge is taller than a man "

*Anthropos apteros, perplexed
To know which turning to take next,
Looked up and wished he were the bird
To whom such doubts must seem absurd*

W H AUDEN

AT LAST THE SECRET IS OUT

At last the secret is out, as it always must come in the
end,

The delicious story is ripe to tell to the intimate friend,
Over the tea-cups and in the square the tongue has its
desire,

Still waters run deep, my dear, there's never smoke
without fire

Behind the corpse in the reservoir, behind the ghost on
the links,

Behind the lady who dances and the man who madly
drinks,

Under the look of fatigue, the attack of migraine and the
sigh,

There is always another story, there is more than meets
the eye

For the clear voice suddenly singing, high up in the
convent wall,

The scent of the elder bushes, the sporting-prints in the
hall,

The croquet matches in summer, the handshake, the
cough, the kiss,

There is always a wicked secret, a private reason for this

W H AUDEN

THE DYING AIRMAN

A HANDSOME young airman lay dying,
And as on the aerodrome he lay,
To the mechanics who round him came sighing,
These last dying words he did say

Now you all remember the message he sent
As an answer to Hamilton's discontent—
There were questions asked about it in the Parliament
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

Now the blacker the berry, the thicker comes the juice
Think of Good Lord Nelson and avoid self-abuse,
For the empty sleeve was no mere excuse
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

'England Expects' was the motto he gave
When he thought of little Emma out on Biscay's wave,
And remembered working on her like a galley-slave
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

The first Great Lord in our English land
To honour the Freudian command,
For a cast in the bush is worth two in the hand
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

Now the Frenchman shot him there as he stood
In the rage of battle in a silk-lined hood
And he heard the whistle of his own hot blood
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

Now stiff on a pillar with a phallic air
Nelson stylites in Trafalgar Square
Reminds the British what once they were
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

If they'd treat their women in the Nelson way
There'd be fewer frigid husbands every day
And many more heroes on the Bay of Biscay
Aboard the Victory, Victory O

LAWRENCE DURRELL

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

I SOMETIMES think I'd rather crow
And be a rooster than to roost
And be a crow But I dunno

A rooster he can roost also,
Which don't seem fair when crows can't crow
Which may help, some Still I dunno

Crows should be glad of one thing, though,
Nobody thinks of eating crow,
While roosters they are good enough
For anyone unless they're tough

There are lots of tough old roosters though,
And anyway a crow can't crow,
So mebbly roosters stand more show
It looks that way But I dunno

ANON

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same,
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools

If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss,
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

RUDYARD KIPLING

I PAINT WHAT I SEE

A Ballad of Artistic Integrity

"WHAT do you paint, when you paint a wall?"

Said John D's grandson Nelson

"Do you paint just anything there at all?"

"Will there be any doves, or a tree in fall?"

"Or a hunting scene, like an English hall?"

"I paint what I see," said Rivera

"What are the colors you use when you paint?"

Said John D's grandson Nelson

"Do you use any red in the beard of a saint?"

"If you do, is it terribly red, or faint?"

"Do you use any blue? Is it Prussian?"

"I paint what I paint," said Rivera

"Whose is that head that I see on my wall?"

Said John D's grandson Nelson

"Is it anyone's head whom we know, at all?"

"A Rensselaer, or a Saltonstall?"

"Is it Franklin D? Is it Mordaunt Hall?"

"Or is it the head of a Russian?"

"I paint what I think," said Rivera

"I paint what I paint, I paint what I see,

"I paint what I think," said Rivera,

"And the thing that is dearest in life to me

"In a bourgeois hall is Integrity,

"However

*"I'll take out a couple of people drinkin'
"And put in a picture of Abraham Lincoln,
"I could even give you McCormuck's reaper
"And still not make my art much cheaper
"But the head of Lenin has got to stay
"Or my friends willl give me the bird today
"The bird, the bird, forever"*

"It's not good taste in a man like me,"
Said John D's grandson Nelson,
"To question an artist's integrity
"Or mention a practical thing like a fee,
"But I know what I like to a large degree
"Though art I hate to hamper,
"For twenty-one thousand conservative bucks
"You painted a radical I say shucks,
"I never could rent the offices—
"The capitalistic offices
"For this, as you know, is a public hall
"And people want doves, or a tree in fall,
"And though your art I dislike to hamper,
"I owe a *little* to God and Gramper,
"And after all,
"It's my wall "

"We'll see if it is," said Rivera

E B WHITE

POEMS

Captain Busby put his beard in his mouth and sucked it, then took it out and spat on it then put it in and sucked it then walked on down the street thinking hard

Suddenly he put his wedding-ring in his trilby hat and put the hat on a passing kitten Then he carefully calculated the width of the pavement with a pair of adjustable sugar-tongs This done he knitted his brows Then he walked on thinking hard

II

Captain Busted Busby frowned hard at a passing ceiling and fixed his eye upon a pair of stationary taxis Suddenly he went up to one of them and addressed himself to the driver He discharged his socks and continued whistling The taxi saluted but he put up with it, and puckered a resigned mouth and knitted a pair of thoughtful eyebrows

III

M looking out of his window with purple curtains saw Captain Busby thoughtfully chewing a less impatient portion of his walking-stick unostentatiously against a lamp-post The road was blue but Captain Busby seemed a very dark green with ivory face (for it was night time) He frowned He looked up to the top of the rapidly emptying street He cut his hair slowly He looked at the bottom of the street He made rapid measurements with a pair of adjustable sugar-tongs These he afterwards secreted in his trousers He then flew into his friend's apartment through the willingly opened window

IV

Marcella waited for her lover outside a public house
known to both of them Immediately Captain Busby ap-
peared holding a woman in his arms This wasn't true
thought Marcella carefully, and was relieved to see that
God had thrown a lamp-post at the Captain, temporarily
disabling him

V

He arranged himself in sugar and put himself in his bath
and prepared to breathe his last

his four bottles lay grouped around him

do your duty in this world and gather dividends from the
dog thrown at you

goodbye my children

and he died and they huskily nailed down his coffin
and put it in ten feet of sod
and grouped around him reading the will

for indeed and forever would he be
to them
just dad

VI

Mother lay crying in the withdrawing room
bitterly bewailing cruel fate who with a flick of his pen
had so completely shattered the even tenour of her ways

sobbed upon the brick platform shaking her fist at every
porter who passed

declaring cruel fate who with a flick of his pen
had so cruelly broken
the even tenour of her ways

VII

she considered the porter with the cap on the side of his
head fitfully
who had squandered his sweet-peas upon her
who had ridden every train and blown all whistles
to feast his evil frontal eyes on her to break the even
tenour of her ways
she shunted her back to him
she put on her large black hat with insolent vulgarity
and deliberately smirked into his face

he was busy
he was doing his duty
he rattled the cans
he gave out composed answers to the backchat following
his curt commands
he went on with his duty forgetting
that he had broken the even tenour of her ways

She walked thoughtfully upon a sugar-box
and would there and then have harangued the station of-
ficials to compel the attention of the porter

but he did not
but he could not
but he did not
and could not should as he had broken the even tenour of
her ways
she thrust a carrot into his face

he gravely took it and handed it without moving a muscle
of his face
to the dominant personality of the station
the station master himself

events moved indefatigably to their long-awaited climax
the station master seized the carrot and conveyed it to a
drawer
reserved for matters of importance
and seizing a document asserting his credentials and authority
motored along the platform and alighted at the lady

madam he said coldly
your carrot is in the drawer
pray come for it or suitable measures will be taken to enforce
the union of yourself and the personality
who broke the even tenour of your ways

lightning juggled above the station portraying its grim
battlements
thunder crashed upon the assembled people
she threw three flashes of self-possessed rays
at him from her large radiant eyes
she ran to the drawer refusing the automobile
she snatched abruptly at the carrot
scenting with inexorable female intuition the precise position
afforded it by reason of its pre-eminent significance
she ran from the room like a bitten wounded thing
and fell laughing upon the station master who had broken
the even
tenour of her ways

PHILIP O'CONNOR

THE ANATOMY OF HAPPINESS

LOTS of truisms don't have to be repeated but there is one
that has got to be,

Which is that it is much nicer to be happy than it is not
to be,

And I shall even add to it by stating unequivocally and
without restraint

That you are much happier when you are happy than
when you ain't

Some people are just naturally Pollyanna,

While others call for sugar and cream and strawberries
on their manna

Now, I think we all ought to say a fig for the happiness
that comes of thinking helpful thoughts and search-
ing your soul,

The most exciting happiness is the happiness generated
by forces beyond your control,

Because if you just depend on your helpful thoughts for
your happiness and would just as soon drink butter-
milk as champagne, and if mink is no better than
lapin to you,

Why you don't even deserve to have anything nice and
exciting happen to you

If you are really Master of your Fate,

It shouldn't make any difference to you whether Cleo-
patra or the Bearded Lady is your mate,

So I hold no brief for the kind of happiness or the kind
of unhappiness that some people constantly carry
around in their breast,

Because that kind of happiness simply consists of being
resigned to the worst just as that kind of unhappiness
consists of being resentful of the best

No, there is only one kind of happiness that I take the
stump for,
Which is the kind that comes when something so won-
derful falls in your lap that joy is what you jump for,
Something not of your own doing,
When the blue sky opens and out pops a refund from
the Government or an invitation to a terrapin dinner
or an unhopd-for Yes from the lovely creature you
have been disconsolately wooing
And obviously such miracles don't happen every day,
But here's hoping they may,
Because then everybody would be happy except the
people who pride themselves on creating their own
happiness who as soon as they saw everybody who
didn't create their own happiness happy they would
probably grieve over sharing their own heretofore
private sublimity,
A condition which I could face with equanimity

OGDEN NASH

COSMOGONY

HIGH up are the angels with best quality wings
very high they are and we cannot see them
the fat little cherubs with pink and white cheeks
and the older members in flowing white robes
high up are the angels that play in the band
but on earth no one has heard their music
and our dull sight remains below the clouds

Down below are the devils with genuine horns
down¹ down under the world where no man goes

frollicking evil beside the great fire
tail-twitching malice stoking continually
down below are the devils the fallen ones
they rise to torment us only in sleep
and when morning comes they are gone

Here is Mr L Smith retail grocer
shirt-sleeved by the counter with oily face
Lady Plumtree stepped in to order canned asparagus
in person and made two remarks about the weather
here is Mr L Smith he has a gold watch in his waistcoat
and his wife to whom he gives no satisfaction
is reading a book on sex in the back room
ready to hide it when her lord comes in

DAVID DAICHES

THE WATCH

I WAKENED on my hot, hard bed,
Upon the pillow lay my head,
Beneath the pillow I could hear
My little watch was ticking clear
I thought the throbbing of it went
Like my continual discontent,
I thought it said in every tick
I am so sick, so sick, so sick,
O death, come quick, come quick, come quick,
Come quick, come quick, come quick, come quick

FRANCES CORNFORD

I NEVER EVEN SUGGESTED IT

I KNOW lots of men who are in love and lots of men who
are married and lots of men who are both,
And to fall out with their loved ones is what all of them
are most loth
They are conciliatory at every opportunity,
Because all they want is serenity and a certain amount of
impunity
Yes, many the swain who has finally admitted that the
earth is flat
Simply to sidestep a spat,
Many the masculine Positively or Absolutely which has
been diluted to an If
Simply to avert a tiff,
Many the two-fisted executive whose domestic conver-
sation is limited to a tactfully interpolated Yes,
And then he is amazed to find that he is being raked
backwards over a bed of coals nevertheless
These misguided fellows are under the impression that
it takes two to make a quarrel, that you can side-
step a crisis by nonaggression and nonresistance,
Instead of removing yourself to a discreet distance
Passivity can be a provoking *modus operandi*,
Consider the Empire and Gandhi
Silence is golden, but sometimes invisibility is goldier
Because loved ones may not be able to make bricks
without straw but often they don't need any straw
to manufacture a bone to pick or blood in their eye
or a chip for their soft white shoulder
It is my duty, gentlemen, to inform you that women are
dictators all, and I recommend to you this moral
In real life it takes only one to make a quarrel

OGDEN NASH

HOW BEASTLY THE BOURGEOIS IS

How beastly the bourgeois is
especially the male of the species—

Presentable, eminently presentable—
shall I make you a present of him?

Isn't he handsome? Isn't he healthy? Isn't he a fine specimen?

doesn't he look the fresh clean englishman, outside?

Isn't it god's own image? tramping his thirty miles a day
after partridges, or a little rubber ball?

wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and quite the
thing?

Oh, but wait!

Let him meet a new emotion, let him be faced with another man's need,

let him come home to a bit of moral difficulty, let life
face him with a new demand on his understanding

and then watch him go soggy, like a wet meringue

Watch him turn into a mess, either a fool or a bully

Just watch the display of him, confronted with a new
demand on his intelligence,

a new life-demand

How beastly the bourgeois is
especially the male of the species—

Nicely groomed, like a mushroom

standing there so sleek and erect and eyeable—

and like a fungus, living on the remains of bygone life
sucking his life out of the dead leaves of greater life

than his own

And even so, he's stale, he's been there too long
Touch him, and you'll find he's all gone inside
Just like an old mushroom, all wormy inside, and hollow
under a smooth skin and an upright appearance

Full of seething, wormy, hollow feelings
rather nasty—

How beastly the bourgeois is !

Standing in their thousands, these appearances, in damp
England

what a pity they can't all be kicked over
like sickening toadstools, and left to melt back, swiftly
into the soil of England

D H LAWRENCE

THE TRAVELLER'S CURSE AFTER MISDIRECTION

(from the Welsh)

MAY they wander stage by stage
Of the same vain pilgrimage,
Stumbling on, age after age,
Night and day, mile after mile,
At each and every step, a stile,
At each and every stile, withal,
May they catch their feet and fall,
At each and every fall they take,
May a bone within them break,
And may the bones that break within
Not me, for variation's sake,
Now rib, now thigh, now arm, now shin,
But always, without fail, THE NECK

ROBERT GRAVES

DON'TS

FIGHT your little fight, my boy,
fight and be a man
Don't be a good little, good little boy
being as good as you can

and agreeing with all the mealy-mouthed, mealy-mouthed
truths that the sly trot out
to protect themselves and their greedy-mouthed, greedy-
mouthed
cowardice, every old lout

Don't live up to the dear little girl who costs
you your manhood, and makes you pay
Nor the dear old mater who so proudly boasts
that you'll make your way -

Don't earn golden opinions, opinions golden,
or at least worth Treasury notes,
from all sorts of men, don't be beholden
to the herd inside the pen

Don't long to have dear little, dear little boys
whom you'll have to educate
to earn their living, nor yet girls, sweet joys
who will find it so hard to mate

Nor a dear little home, with its cost, its cost
that you have to pay,
earning your living while your life is lost
and dull death comes in a day

Don't be sucked in by the su-superior,
don't swallow the culture bait,

don't drink, don't drink and get beerier and beerier,
do learn to discriminate

Do hold yourself together, and fight
with a hit-hit here and a hit-hit there,
and a comfortable feeling at night
that you've let in a little air

A little fresh air in the money sty,
knocked a little hole in the holy prison,
done your own little bit, made your own little try
that the risen Christ should be risen

D H LAWRENCE

DIRGE

1-2-3 was the number he played but today the number
came 3-2-1,
bought his Carbide at 30 and it went to 29, had the
favorite at Bowie but the track was slow—

O, executive type, would you like to drive a floating
power, knee-action, silk-upholstered 'six? Wed a
Hollywood star? Shoot the course in 58? Draw to
the ace, king, jack?

O, fellow with a will who won't take no, watch out
for three cigarettes on the same, single match, O
democratic voter born in August under Mars, be-
ware of liquidated rails—

Dénouement to denouement, he took a personal pride
in the certain, certain way he lived his own, private
life,

but nevertheless, they shut off his gas, nevertheless,
the bank foreclosed, nevertheless, the landlord
called, nevertheless, the radio broke,

And twelve o'clock arrived just once too often,
just the same he wore one grey tweed suit, bought one
straw hat, drank one straight Scotch, walked one
short step, took one long look, drew one deep breath,
just one too many,

And wow he died as wow he lived,
going whop to the office and blooie home to sleep and
biff got married and bam had children and oof got
fired,
zowie did he live and zowie did he die,

With who the hell are you at the corner of his casket,
and where the hell we going on the right hand
silver knob, and who the hell cares walking second
from the end with an American Beauty wreath
from why the hell not

Very much missed by the circulation staff of the New
York Evening Post, deeply, deeply mourned by the
B M T ,

Wham, Mr Roosevelt, pow, Sears Roebuck, awk, big
dipper, bop, summer rain,
bong, Mr , bong, Mr , bong, Mr , bong

KENNETH FEARING

A GLASS OF BEER

THE lanky hank of a she in the inn over there
Nearly killed me for asking the loan of a glass of beer
May the devil grip the whey-faced slut by the hair,
And beat bad manners out of her skin for a year

That parboiled imp, with the hardest jaw you will see
On virtue's path, and a voice that would rasp the dead,
Came roaring and raging the minute she looked at me,
And threw me out of the house on the back of my head!

If I asked her master he'd give me a cask a day,
But she with the beer at hand, not a gill would arrange!
May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten and may
The High King of Glory permit her to get the mange

JAMES STEPHENS

NIGHTMARE

WHEN you're lying awake with a dismal headache, and
repose is taboo'd by anxiety,
I conceive you may use any language you choose to
indulge in, without impropriety,
For your brain is on fire—the bedclothes conspire of usual
slumber to plunder you
First your counterpane goes, and uncovers your toes, and
your sheet slips demurely from under you,
Then the blanketing tickles—you feel like mixed pickles—
so terribly sharp is the pricking,

And you're hot, and you're cross, and you tumble and toss
till there's nothing 'twixt you and the ticking
Then the bedclothes all creep to the ground in a heap,
and you pick 'em all up in a tangle,
Next your pillow resigns and politely declines to remain at
its usual angle!
Well, you get some repose in the form of a doze, with hot
eye-balls and head ever aching,
But your slumbering teems with such horrible dreams
that you'd very much better be waking,
For you dream you are crossing the Channel, and tossing
about in a steamer from Harwich—
Which is something between a large bathing machine and
a very small second-class carriage—
And you're giving a treat (penny ice and cold meat) to a
party of friends and relations—
They're a ravenous horde—and they all came on board at
Sloane Square and South Kensington Stations
And bound on that journey you find your attorney (who
started that morning from Devon),
He's a bit undersized, and you don't feel surprised when
he tells you he's only eleven
Well, you're driving like mad with this singular lad (by-
the-bye the ship's now a four-wheeler),
And you're playing round games, and he calls you bad
names when you tell him that 'ties pay the dealer',
But this you can't stand, so you throw up your hand, and
you find you're as cold as an icicle,
In your shirt and your socks (the black silk with gold
clocks), crossing Salisbury Plain on a bicycle
And he and the crew are on bicycles too—which they've
somehow or other invested in—
And he's telling the tars, all the particulars of a company
he's interested in—

It's a scheme of devices, to get at low prices, all goods
from cough mixtures to cables
(Which tickled the sailors) by treating retailers, as
though they were all *vegetables*—
You get a good spadesman to plant a small tradesman,
(first take off his boots with a boot-tree),
And his legs will take root, and his fingers will shoot,
and they'll blossom and bud like a fruit-tree—
From the greengrocer tree you get grapes and green pea,
cauliflower, pineapples, and cranberries,
While the pastrycook plant, cherry brandy will grant,
apple puffs, and three-corners, and banberries—
The shares are a penny, and ever so many are taken by
Rothschild and Baring,
And just as a few are allotted to you, you awake with a
shudder despairing—
You're a regular wreck, with a crick in your neck, and no
wonder you snore, for your head's on the floor, and
you've needles and pins from your soles to your shins,
and your flesh is a-creep for your left leg's asleep, and
you've cramp in your toes, and a fly on your nose, and
some fluff in your lung, and a feverish tongue, and a
thirst that's intense, and a general sense that you
haven't been sleeping in clover,
But the darkness has passed, and it's daylight at last, and
the night has been long—ditto ditto my song—and
thank goodness they're both of them over!

W S GILBERT

TRACT

I WILL teach you my townspeople
how to perform a funeral—
for you have it over a troop
of artists—
unless one should scour the world—
you have the ground sense necessary

See! the hearse leads
I begin with a design for a hearse
For Christ's sake not black—
nor white either—and not polished!
Let it be weathered—like a farm wagon—
with gilt wheels (this could be
applied fresh at small expense)
or no wheels at all
a rough dray to drag over the ground

Knock the glass out!
My God—glass, my townspeople!
For what purpose? Is it for the dead
to look out or for us to see
how well he is housed or to see
the flowers or the lack of them—
or what?
To keep the rain and snow from him?
He will have a heavier rain soon
pebbles and dirt and what not
Let there be no glass—
and no upholstery! phew!
and no little brass rollers
and small easy wheels on the bottom—
my townspeople what are you thinking of!

A rough plain hearse then
with gilt wheels and no top at all
On this the coffin lies
by its own weight

No wreaths please—
especially no hot-house flowers
Some common memento is better,
something he prized and is known by
his old clothes—a few books perhaps—
God knows what! You realize
how we are about these things,
my townspeople—
something will be found—anything—
even flowers if he had come to that
So much for the hearse

For heaven's sake though see to the driver!
Take off the silk hat! In fact
that's no place at all for him
up there unceremoniously
dragging our friend out to his own dignity!
Bring him down—bring him down!
Low and inconspicuous! I'd not have him ride
on the wagon at all—damn him—
the undertaker's understrapper!
Let him hold the reins
and walk at the side
and inconspicuously too!

Then briefly as to yourselves
Walk behind—as they do in France,
seventh class, or if you ride
Hell take curtains! Go with some show
of inconvenience, sit openly—

to the weather as to grief
Or do you think you can shut grief in?
What—from us? We who have perhaps
nothing to lose? Share with us
share with us—it will be money
in your pockets
Go now
I think you are ready

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

V IS FOR VICTORY, AS YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE

I NEVER really like this cat though she is
a valuable asset to this household
Everybody smiles and is pleased when she
rolls over on a mouse, and if she gets a
rat by the back of the neck she drags him
in until somebody has noticed her skill,
then she will chew off its head

She does far worse than this she
catches birds and it makes no difference
how the family frowns, she pays no attention to it
She has just caught a little bird and killed
a song, it flutters a little in her tightened jaws
I try to get it loose but suddenly I see the
head lean back—give up the ghost
In each of the cat's eyes is a vast V
No more songs now in the waving grass

MARSDEN HARTLEY

HEAVEN

FISH (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond,
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud,
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A purpose in Liquidity
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind,
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair,
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found,

Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
'There shall be no more land, say fish

RUPERT BROOKE

DOWN, WANTON, DOWN!

DOWN, wanton, down! Have you no shame
That at the whisper of Love's name,
Or Beauty's, presto! up you raise
Your angry head and stand at gaze?

Poor bombard-captain, sworn to reach
The ravelin and effect a breach—
Indifferent what you storm or why,
So be that in the breach you die!

Love may be blind, but Love at least
Knows what is man and what mere beast,
Or Beauty wayward, but requires
More delicacy from her squires

Tell me, my witless, whose one boast
Could be your staunchness at the post,
When were you made a man of parts
To think fine and profess the arts?

Will many-gifted Beauty come
Bowling to your bald rule of thumb,
Or Love swear loyalty to your crown?
Be gone, have done! Down, wanton, down!

ROBERT GRAVES

THE BUNYIP AND THE WHISTLING KETTLE

I KNEW a most superior camper
Whose methods were absurdly wrong,
He did not live on tea and damper
But took a little stove along

And every place he came to settle
He spread with gadgets saving toil,
He even had a whistling kettle
To warn him it was on the boil

Beneath the waratahs and wattles,
Boronia and coolibah,
He scattered paper, cans and bottles,
And parked his nasty little car

He camped, this sacrilegious stranger
(The moon was at the full that week),
Once in a spot that teemed with danger
Beside a bunyip-haunted creek

He spread his junk but did not plunder,
Hoping to stay the weekend long,
He watched the bloodshot sun go under
Across the silent billabong

He ate canned food without demurring,
He put the kettle on for tea
He did not see the water stirring
Far out beside a sunken tree

Then, for the day had made him swelter
And night was hot and tense to spring,
He donned a bathing-suit in shelter
And left the firelight's friendly ring

He felt the water kiss and tingle
He heard the silence—none too soon!
A ripple broke against the shingle,
And dark with blood it met the moon

Abandoned in the hush, the kettle
Screamed as it guessed its master's plight,
And loud it screamed, the lifeless metal,
Far into the malicious night

JOHN MANIFOLD

MINIVER CHEEVY

MINIVER Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons,
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were
prancing
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors,
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albert he had never seen one,
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing,
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it,
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A PREMATURELY OLD MAN

It is common knowledge to every schoolboy and even
every Bachelor of Arts,
That all sin is divided into two parts
One kind of sin is called a sin of commission, and that
is very important,
And it is what you are doing when you are doing some-
thing you ortant,
And the other kind of sin is just the opposite and is
called a sin of omission and is equally bad in the eyes
of all right-thinking people, from Billy Sunday to
Buddha,
And it consists of not having done something you shudda
I might as well give you my opinion of these two kinds
of sin as long as, in a way, against each other we are
pitting them,
And that is, don't bother your head about sins of com-
mission because however sinful, they must at least be
fun or else you wouldn't be committing them
It is the sin of omission, the second kind of sin,
That lays eggs under your skin
The way you get really painfully bitten
Is by the insurance you haven't taken out and the checks
you haven't added up the stubs of and the appoint-
ments you haven't kept and the bills you haven't paid
and the letters you haven't written
Also, about sins of omission there is one particularly pain-
ful lack of beauty
Namely, it isn't as though it had been a riotous red
letter day or night every time you neglected to do your
duty,
You didn't get a wicked forbidden thrill

Every time you let a policy lapse or forgot to pay a bill,
You didn't slap the lads in the tavern on the back and
loudly cry Whee,
Let's all fail to write just one more letter before we go
home, and this round of unwritten letters is on me
No, you never get any fun
Out of the things you haven't done,
But they are the things that I do not like to be amid,
Because the suitable things you didn't do give you a lot
more trouble than the unsuitable things you did
The moral is that it is probably better not to sin at all,
but if some kind of sin you must be pursuing,
Well, remember to do it by doing rather than by not
doing

OGDEN NASH

CRUEL CLEVER CAT

SALLY, having swallowed cheese,
Directs down holes the scented breeze,
Enticing thus with baited breath
Nice mice to an untimely death

GEOFFREY TAYLOR

ENGLISH LIBERAL

"I THINK" thought Sam Butler,
"Truth ever lies
In mean compromise"
What could be subtler
Than the thought of Sam Butler?

GEOFFREY TAYLOR

MIKE O'DAY

THIS is the grave of Mike O'Day
Who died maintaining his right of way
His right was clear, his will was strong,
But he's just as dead as if he'd been wrong

ANON

A CASE

As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there
He wasn't there again today—
I wish to God he'd go away!

ANON

A LIMERICK

THERE was a young man from Japan
Whose limericks never would scan,
When they said it was so,
He replied, "Yes, I know,
But I always try to get as many words into the last line
as ever I possibly can."

ANON

INFANT INNOCENCE

THE Grizzly Bear is huge and wild,
He has devoured the infant child
The infant child is not aware
It has been eaten by the bear

A E HOUSMAN

RELATIVITY

THERE was a young lady named Bright,
Who travelled much faster than light,
 She started one day
 In the relative way,
And returned on the previous night

ANON.

MIND AND MATTER

THERE was a faith-healer of Deal,
Who said, "Although pain isn't real,
 If I sit on a pin
 And it punctures my skin,
I dislike what I fancy I feel "

ANON.

THE CRIMES OF LIZZIE BORDEN

LIZZIE BORDEN with an axe,
Hit her father forty whacks,
When she saw what she had done,
She hit her mother forty-one

ANON

THE PURPLE COW

I NEVER saw a Purple Cow,
 I never hope to see one,
But I can tell you, anyhow,
 I'd rather see than be one

GELETT BURGESS

MISS TWYE

MISS TWYE was soaping her breasts in her bath
When she heard behind her a meaning laugh
And to her amazement she discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom cupboard

GAVIN EWART

THE TURTLE

THE turtle lives 'twixt plated decks
Which practically conceal its sex
I think it clever of the turtle
In such a fix to be so fertile

OGDEN NASH

THE HORSE

I KNOW two things about the horse,
And one of them is rather coarse

ANON

ADDENDUM

AND that's what sits upon its torse
And says, "Giddyap!" to the poor horse

ANON

IT PAYS

THERE was a young man of Montrose
Who had pockets in none of his clothes
 When asked by his lass
 Where he carried his brass,
He said "Darling, I pay through the nose "

ARNOLD BENNETT

BOSTON

I COME from the city of Boston,
The home of the bean and the cod,
Where the Cabots speak only to Lowells,
And the Lowells speak only to God

ANON

HEAD AND HEART

I PUT my hand upon my heart
And swore that we should never part—
I wonder what I should have said
If I had put it on my head

C D B ELLIS

THE SEA-GULL

HARK to the whimper of the sea-gull,
He weeps because he's not an ea-gull
Suppose you were, you silly sea-gull,
Could you explain it to your she-gull?

OGDEN NASH

REFLECTIONS ON ICE-BREAKING

Candy
Is dandy
But liquor
Is quicker

OGDEN NASH

I AM ROSE

I AM Rose my eyes are blue
I am Rose and who are you
I am Rose and when I sing
I am Rose like anything

GERTRUDE STEIN

A YOUNG LADY OF SPAIN

THERE was a young lady of Spain
Who was dreadfully sick in a train,
Not once, but again
And again and again,
And again and again and again

ANON

MY FACE

As a beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome, by far,
But my face—I don't mind it
For I am behind it,
It's the people in front get the jar!

ANTHONY EUWER

from OPUS 6 in "SPECTRA"

IF I were only dafter
I might be making hymns
To the liquor of your laughter
And the lacquer of your limbs

"EMANUEL MORGAN"
(Witter Bynner)

BILLY

BILLY, in one of his nice new sashes,
Fell in the fire and was burned to ashes,
Now, although the room grows chilly,
I haven't the heart to poke poor Billy

HARRY GRAHAM

AN EPICURE

AN epicure, dining at Crewe,
Found quite a large mouse in his stew
Said the waiter, "Don't shout,
And wave it about,
Or the rest will be wanting one, too!"

ANON

IT ISN'T THE COUGH

It isn't the cough
That carries you off,
It's the coffin
They carry you off in

ANON

MENDELIAN THEORY

THERE was a young woman called Starkie,
Who had an affair with a darky
The result of her sins
Was quadruplets, not twins—
One black, and one white, and two khaki

ANON

A POLITICIAN

a politician is an arse upon
which everyone has sat except a man

E E CUMMINGS

AN OLD MAN FROM PERU

THERE was an old man from Peru
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe,
He woke in a fright
In the middle of the night
And found it was perfectly true

ANON

AN OLD MAN OF BOULOGNE

THERE was an old man of Boulogne
Who sang a most topical song
It wasn't the words
Which frightened the birds,
But the horrible double entendre

ANON.

KINDLY UNHITCH THAT STAR, BUDDY

I HARDLY suppose I know anybody who wouldn't rather
be a success than a failure,
Just as I suppose every piece of crabgrass in the garden
would much rather be an azalea,
And in celestial circles all the run-of-the-mill angels
would rather be archangels or at least cherubim and
seraphim,
And in the legal world all the little process-servers hope
to grow up into great big bailiffim and sheriffim
Indeed, everybody wants to be a wow,
But not everybody knows exactly how
Some people think they will eventually wear diamonds
instead of rhinestones
Only by everlastingly keeping their noses to their grhine-
stones,
And other people think they will be able to put in more
time at Palm Beach and the Ritz
By not paying too much attention to attendance at the
office but rather in being brilliant by starts and fits
Some people after a full day's work sit up all night getting
a college education by correspondence,
While others seem to think they'll get just as far by de-
voting their evenings to the study of the difference in
temperament between brunettance and blondance
Some stake their all on luck,
And others put their faith in their ability to pass the buck
In short, the world is filled with people trying to achieve
success,
And half of them think they'll get it by saying No and half
of them by saying Yes,

And if all the ones who say No said Yes, and vice versa,
such is the fate of humanity that ninety-nine per cent
of them still wouldn't be any better off than they
were before,

Which perhaps is just as well because if everybody was a
success nobody could be contemptuous of anybody
else and everybody would start in all over again trying
to be a bigger success than everybody else so they
would have somebody to be contemptuous of and so
on forevermore,

Because when people start hitching their wagons to a star,
That's the way they are

OGDEN NASH

RINGSEND

(After reading Tolstoi)

I WILL live in Ringsend
With a red-headed whore,
And the fan-light gone in
Where it lights the hall door,
And listen each night
For her querulous shout
As at last she steels in
And the pubs empty out
To soothe that wild breast
With my old fangled songs
Till she feels it redressed
From inordinate wrongs,
Imagined, outrageous, preposterous
 wrongs—
Till peace at last comes,

Shall be all I will do
Where the little lamp blooms
Like a rose in a stew,
And up the back garden
The sound comes to me
Of the lapsing, unsoilable,
Whispering sea

OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY

GOLLY, HOW TRUTH WILL OUT

How does a person get to be a capable liar?
That is something that I respectfully inquirer,
Because I don't believe a person will ever set the world
on fire
Unless they are a capable liar
Some wise man said that words were given to us to conceal
our thoughts,
But if a person has nothing but truthful words why their
thoughts haven't even the protection of a pair of
panties or shoghts,
And a naked thought is ineffectual as well as improper,
And hasn't a chance in the presence of a glib chinchilla-
clad whopper
One of the greatest abilities a person can have, I guess,
Is the ability to say Yes when they mean No and No
when they mean Yes
Oh to be Machiavellian, oh to be unscrupulous, oh to
be glib!
Oh to be ever prepared with a plausible fib!
Because then a dinner engagement or a contract or a
treaty is no longer a fetter,

Because liars can just logically lie their way out of it
if they don't like it or if one comes along that they
like better,
And do you think their conscience prickles?
No, it tickles
And please believe that I mean every one of these lines
as I am writing them
Because once there was a small boy who was sent to the
drugstore to buy some bitter stuff to put on his nails
to keep him from biting them
And in his humiliation he tried to lie to the clerk
And it didn't work,
Because he said My mother sent me to buy some bitter
stuff for a friend of mine's nails that bites them, and
the clerk smiled wisely and said I wonder who that
friend could be,
And the small boy broke down and said Me,
And it was me, or at least I was him,
And all my subsequent attempts at subterfuge have been
equally grim,
And that is why I admire a suave prevarication because
I prevaricate so awkwardly and gauchely,
And that is why I can never amount to anything po-
litically or socially

OGDEN NASH

HONEY, TAKE A WHIFF ON ME

Oh, whiffaree an' a whiff-o-rye,
Gonna keep a-whiffin', boys, till I die
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Chorus Take a whiff on me, take a whiff on me,
Hi, hi, baby, take a whiff on me,
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

I went down to Mister Apperson's place,
Says to Mister Apperson, right to his face—
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me—

'I ain' gonna buy coke here no mo',
An' Mister Apperson slam de do'
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Went to Mister Lehman's on a lope,
Sign in de window said, 'No mo' coke'
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Well, I wake up in de mornin' by de city clock bell,
An' de niggers up town givin' cocaine hell,
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Goin' up State Street, comin' down Main,
Lookin' for a woman dat use cocaine,
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

De blacker de berry, de sweeter de juice,
Takes a brown-skin woman for my pertickeler use
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

I'se got a nickel, you's got a dime,
You buy de coke an' I'll buy de wine
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

I chew my terbacker, I spit my juice,
I love my baby, till it ain' no use,
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Well, de cocaine habit is mighty bad,
It kill ev'body I know it to have had
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Cocaine's for hosses an' not for men,
De doctors say it'll kill you, but dey don' say when
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

Chorus Take a whiff on me, take a whiff on me,
Hi, hi, baby, take a whiff on me,
Ho, ho, honey, take a whiff on me

ANON

THE MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE

Oh, the girl that I loved she was handsome,
I tried all I knew her to please
But I couldn't please her a quarter as well
As the man on the flying trapeze

Chorus

Oh, he flies through the air with the greatest of ease,
This daring young man on the flying trapeze
His figure is handsome, all girls he can please,
And my love he purloined her away

Last night as usual I went to her home
There sat her old father and mother alone
I asked for my love and they soon made it known
That she-e had flown away

She packed up her box and eloped in the night,
To go-o with him at his ease

He lowered her down from a four-story flight,
By means of his flying trapeze

He took her to town and he dressed her in tights,
That he-e might live at his ease
He ordered her up to the tent's awful height,
To appear on the flying trapeze

Now she flies through the air with the greatest of ease,
This daring young girl on the flying trapeze
Her figure is handsome, all men she can please,
And my love is purloined away

Once I was happy, but now I'm forlorn,
Like an old coat that is tattered and torn,
Left to this wide world to fret and to mourn,
Betrayed by a maid in her teens

ANON

THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

*(To JS/07/M/378
This Marble Monument
Is Erected by the State)*

HE was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he
was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community
Except for the War till the day he retired

He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every
day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in
every way
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully
insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but
left it cured
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living de-
clare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment
Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year,
When there was peace, he was for peace, when there was
war, he went
He was married and added five children to the popula-
tion,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a
parent of his generation,
And our teachers report that he never interfered with
their education
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have
heard

W H AUDEN

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